THE

DIVINE WISDOM

OF THE

DRÂVIDA SAINTS

BY

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The English Translator of Râmânuja's Holy Commentaries on the Bhagavad-Gîtâ; the Author of The Holy Lives of the Âzhvârs, or the Drâvida Saints; Lectures on Inspiration &c. &c. &c.

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THE DIVINE WISDOM OF THE DRÂVIDA SAINTS.

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22	5	ntensely.	intensely
27	12	chided	chid
36	7	out of the way	out-of-the-way
37	27	Admidst	Amidst
72	25	religions	religious
80	4	ofr	for
81	25	grea	great
91	5	Âzhvât	Âzhvâr
105	29	Love	Bliss
108	35	contenment	Contentment
111	11	on	no
128-129	14-1	immediatly	immediately
129	12	My own	Our
130	11	fear	fear for
130	25	copmany	company
131	3	criticalstate	critical state
131	13	fear him yet, as	fear for him yet as, for
132	8	out of the way	out-of-the-way
132	21	सचि	सान्ति
135	32	कुडारं	कुठारं
136	24	to one	to the one
139	3	choses	chooses
140	10	with him	to him
140	16	it in all	it with all
142	6	Vishnu's refuge	refuge with Vishṇu
142	25	Engl: Fr.	Engl: Tr:
142	31	Teachers'	Teacher's
143	22	and unto	unto
145	3	cast	cast away
146	24	the same on one	alike on the one
148	7	head cut	head had been cut
149	14	wherever	whenever
156	11	at time	during times

PAGE.	LINE.	FOR	READ.
158	12	in Gîta	in the Gîtâ
162	2	were of	were of a
163	7	South See	Sea at Cape Comorin
163	10	to pray	to pray to
164	6	caused	caused its
164	10	see	sea
165	15	former-faith-demands	former—faith—demands
166	23	ceremoney	ceremony
170	17	his worth	worth his
178	9	inquire	inquire into
178	12	"favoured" man	man "favoured"
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187	7	to Him	of Him
188	12	with Bhattar	Bhattar
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190	29	His, attributes	His attributes
192	22	निवाय	निवारय
192	22	ययूखान्	मयूखान्
192	32	थद्विरहो	यद्विरहो
193	11	night	*night*
193	14	evening	*evening*
209	23	account	account
214	29	विहगे	विहगे
214	30	हिनो	हिनी
215	1	त्वड्गा	स्त्वद्दा
215	2	श्रीकूइ	श्रीरि
215	2	भ्रमक्रथं	ब्रूमःकथं
215	2	त्वांवंय	त्वांवयम्

INTRODUCTION.

"*LOVE* [1] makes the Saint, *Wisdom* [2], the sage," are the sage words of Ṣrî Pârthasârathi Yogi in his "Select Evidence" (1892 A.C). This book, which I name: "the Divine Wisdom of the Drâviḍâ Saints," is really a series of Discourses on the Highest Mystery, viz., Wisdom matured into Love of God. This, in other words, is no other than the fullest blooming of the lotus-heart of man thirsting for spiritual communion with God. This again, in other words, means the infinite expansion or development of the consciousness of man so as to fully realise what it is for man to infinitely love his God and what it is for God to infinitely love His own creature; or Divine love, filial and parental. This book treats of both these kinds of love. Whereas man's love to God is the culmination of his spiritual aspiration, God's love to man is the fulfilment of His purpose of creation [3]. By Love, God (Brahman) creates and completes. By Love, man begins and attains to God.

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1. This constitutes our *Mystical* Theology or *Bhagavad - Vishayam*. Says Fr: de Sales: "The end of speculative theology is to teach us to *know* God; and the object of mystical theology is to teach us to *love* Him. One produces learned men, doctors, theologians; whilst the other forms saints, or ardent lovers of the Almighty, devoted to His Service, and burning with zeal for His interests."

2. This constitutes our *Scholastic* or *Speculative* Theology or *Bhâshyam*. [Vide Note 1.]

3. This Love emanating in creation is because of the Blissful (*ânanda*) Nature of God. This creation is called therefore the *lîlâ* or sport of the Deity. A Magic papyrus says: "That Truth (the God of wisdom) created the world by bursting into 'Seven peals of laughter.' thus typifying the Bliss of the Deity in emanation or creation, caused by that divine Love and compassion for all that lives and breathes, which is the well-spring of the Supreme Cause of the Universe." The Upanishad - Epithet of Brahmam for the God-head means He who is Great, and makes all His creatures, like Himself, great. [*Vide* also p: xxvii of our Holy.Lives of Drâvida Saints.]

2. Love is *Bhakti* in Samskrit. To *know* God, to *love* God, and to *serve* God are the three stages which mark the Journey of the God-aspiring soul. " 'To *know* God,' marks his entry in the Path, 'to *love* God' marks his successful travel on the Path, and 'to *serve* God' marks the Goal or the End of the Path. When we gave out the translation of Râmânujâ's Commentaries on Bhagavad-Gîtâ, we showed how, according to Râmânuja, the Vedântas are not treatises which simply give us a mere *knowledge* of God, but they are treatises, revealing the Doctrine of *Love* to God. Râmânuja, the Prince of sages and saints (A. C. 1017), wrote in his Preface to this work (P. 10) thus:—

" Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by His having to persuade Arjuna to fight, Ṣrî Krishna promulgated the doctrine of Bhakti-Yoga—led up to by Jnâna and Karma—, or that Path of Loving-Devotion which is the burthen of all the Vedânta-teaching, and by which He is indicated as the Only Object of Love; and that, loved, He Himself is the Means to lead man to the climax of his ambition viz; *Moksha* (or salvation from all imperfect states or modes of existence)."

But of the combination of the triple aspect viz., (1) *knowledge*, (2) *love* (3) and *service* to God, Gîtâ dwells largely on the first factor, sketches out the outlines of the second factor, and alludes to the third factor. The present book, though not a regular treatise on the second factor, may yet be taken to be an interesting Prelude to the *Bhagavad-Vishayam*, from which in the shape of topics it is drawn and arranged. The book indeed makes frequent mention of the third factor, viz: *service* to God, for example, *vide*, Topics No, 156 p. 176 and No. 165 p. 188.

3. In the Bhagavad-gîtâ, above referred to, allusion was made to this Renowned work, viz., the *Bhagavad-Vishayam* in the following terms:—

"' The Vaishṇavas, all the world over, especially the Vaishṇavas of Bengal and North India, will heartily welcome the frequent references I

have made, in the Foot-Notes, to Ṣrî *Bhâgavata*,—a remarkable work on *Bhakti*—a work which is reverenced by the Hindus as almost apocalyptic. Also the reader is here and there introduced to that other greater work on the still Higher stages of Love, the Hermeneutic Literature known as the *Bhagavad-Vishayam* or voluminous commentaries on the Love-outpourings of the Inspired Saint Parâṅkuṣa (alias, Nammâzhvâr [1] [P: xv Pref :]."

To give the world a few gems out of this Treasury of Divine Love, in an English dress, is the object of the present work. To give the whole of it at once is a herculean task. That this is possible depends on strong health, a mighty intellect, and a heart which has truly liquified to God,—added to this, inspiration by God's grace. Otherwise it is simply profane to attempt the work. Yet, to show to the world what wealth of thought and sentiment lie buried in the vast storehouse of Drâviḍian Intellect and Heart, a collection of a few truths culled out of the ten voluminous Quarto Tomes, covering nearly 5000 pages called the Bhagavad-Vishayam, aforesaid [published in Telugu Characters during years 1871-1876 (A.C)], is now presented to the world as a specimen. Even this weak effort on our part is due to the highly inspiring en-

1. He is the chief of the Saints. These saints or *Âzhvârs* as they are called, are the Drâvida Saints prophetically referred to in the Ṣrî Bhâgavata [Bk. XI. ch-5. Verses 38-40]. The following extract taken from our Lectures on Inspiration &c., Part II. pp. 67-68, will help to give some idea of the character of this Love-Saint :—" Briefly St. Nammâzhvâr says that when one is overcome by *Bhakti*-exaltation, trembling in every cell of his being, he must freely and passively allow this influence to penetrate his being, and carry him beyond all known states of consciousness. Never from fear or shame, that bystanders may take him for a madman, ought the exhibition of this *bhakti-rapture* that deluges his being, to be suppressed. The very madness is the distinguishing character of the enraptured Saint, distinguishing him from the ordinary mortals to whom such beatific experience is necessarily denied. The very madness is the Bhaktas' pride. 'In that very madness', the Saint exhorts, 'run, jump, cry, laugh and sing, and let every man witness it.' [Vide his Life in our " Saint's Lives."]

couragement dowered on us from time to time by means of many loving letters by our Guru Ṣrî Pârthasârathi Yogi.

4. The plan followed is a division of the Book into a number of short topics,[1] each complete and independent in itself, and illustrated by conversations and anecdotes, thus for the first time giving to the Western world an idea of this Eastern method of inculcating spiritual instruction. Another novel feature of this book consists in its having copious footnotes, which are mostly correspondences selected from out of a wide range of works of Western Divines so as to show how religious ideas are found to have unity and universality; how it may be seen that One raceless and countryless God indeed rules over all races and all countries, and how the Highest Mystery of religion consists in the fervid over-mastering intensity of rapt love to God—which is the highest wisdom, the highest mysticism and occultism leading to liberation and beatitude,—or communion with God.

The plan a'so is one in which each topic may be read by itself, without reference to its neighbours. And then too it has the beauty of brevity, as being illustrative of one subject at a time and so suited as to be fit for different frames of mind. They may thus be supposed to be sufficiently inviting even to a casual reader, without wearying. For easy reference, a synopsis of contents has also been prepared and added.

1. Peter of Villars, Archbishop of Vienna suggested such a plan when St. Francis De Sales wrote his "Treatise on the Love of God." The latter says:—"Among other hints which he was kind enough to suggest, he particularly recommended that the chapters into which my subject was divided should not be longer than was indispensably necessary. The reason alleged for this advice was that travellers are seldom disposed to purchase the pleasure of viewing curious objects at the expense of a considerable interruption to their journey, though they willingly turn a few steps from their direct route to see any thing particularly worthy of notice" [P: XXI. Introduction].

5. Should this book be found acceptable and useful to the public in the way it is presented, we should be flattered to set ourselves gladly to work again to produce one or two more volumes of the kind, for which there is ample material.

6. After the publication of the English Translation of Râmânuja's Gîtâ-Commentaries, we had a mind to put our hand to the Vedânta-Sûtras; but to our agreeable surprise we found that Prof. Rângâchârya had already begun his translation of Ṣrî Bhâshya, of which we already possess Volume I, a work to which no other than Prof. M. Rangâchârya, of his erudition in Sanskṛit and English, could have done full justice. The Samskrit Treasures of the Drâviḍian sages have thus one after another seen light; but if one should turn his attention to the Drâviḍian Treasures of Divine Love, he would be astounded at the large scope there is for taking up that field. Max Muller in his latest work: "The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy" (Pp: xx-xxi, Preface), expresses himself to the following effect:—

"In some cases the enthusiasm of native students may seem to have carried them too far, and a mixing up of philosophical with religious and theosophic propaganda, inevitable as it is said to be in India, is always dangerous, * * * What we want are texts and translations, and any information that can throw light on the chronology of Indian philosophy. Nor should their labour be restricted to Samskrit Texts. In the South of India there exists a philosophical literature which though it may show clear traces of Samskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes. Unfortunately few scholars only have taken up as yet, the study of the Drâvidian languages and literature, but young students who complain that there is nothing left to do in Samskrit literature, would I believe, find their labours amply rewarded in that field."

Unfortunately Max Muller has departed from this world before he would have had the satisfaction of seeing his desire at least partly fulfilled. That, with the present book of this kind in hand, we should have been deprived of the satisfaction of pre-

senting him with it—for he is no more with us—is a matter of much personal regret to us as we know the warm welcome he accorded to the English Translation of Râmânuja's Commentaries on the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, in his letter dated 11th May 1899 (Oxford). We however presume that labours in the Drávidian Field, such as :

(1). *Ṣrî-vachana-bhûshaṇa* or The "Good-Word-Jewel", by Ṣrî Pârthasârathi Yogi;
(2). *Tattva-traya* or The Three Categories, by the same;
(3). The *Nityânusandhâna Series* by M. B. Ṣrînivâsa Aiyangâr, M.A. Mysore;
(4). *Ṣivajnâna-Bodha* by J.M. Nallasâmi Pillai, B.A.B.L;[1]
(5). *Light of Grace* by Do.

had come to his notice; as well as the labours of the great Tamil Scholar, Dr. G. U. Pope, whose latest work is the *Tiruvâchakam* of Mânikka-vâchakar. What causes us regret is that the beautiful Vaishṅava Field of Drâvidian Lore has not as yet found a Western Champion like this great Doctor. Until one arises, the public must be satisfied with lesser attempts in this direction by native scholars, these possessing, however, the advantages of understanding rightly the spirit of what they write.

7. Other motives also which actuated us in bringing out a work of the present kind need some mention. One is that

1. The following extracts from this work are useful :—

"It is not every body, who has the desire to study Philosophy or can become a Philosopher. To these I would recommend the devotional works of our Saints, Ṣaiva or Vaishṅava. Unlike the Hindus of other parts of this vast Peninsula (India) it is the peculiar pride of the Tamilian (=Dravidian) that he possesses a Tamil (Drâvid) Veda, which consists of Tiruvâimozhi, Devâram &c. This is not an empty boast."

"The Tamil (Drâvid) Veda is the outpouring of their (Saints') love."

"I cannot do better than recommend these very books as a first course, and the conviction will surely dawn upon his mind......that he has nothing better for his last course than what he had for his first course." [Introduction. Pp. xviii-xix].

of bringing to light a lot of 'Old Spiritual Sayings,' lying hidden in unread and little understood books and which are therefore being forgotten by the present generation. And we are on the other hand deluged by so many "New Sayings" by the moderns, hardly leaving one, time to look back into the archaic records of the "Old Sayings." Whether the New Sayings are really new, or only Old Sayings put into new bottles, the reader may judge for himself after perusal and comparison. Considering the flood of New Sayings that is deluging the land, it is time that the more valuable Old Sayings be re-habilitated; for these will otherwise vanish into the limbo of the forgotten past. Max Muller foresaw this like a prophet when he spoke :—

> "It is feared however that even this small remnant of philosophical learning will vanish in one or two generations, as the youths of the present day, even if belonging to orthodox Brâhmanic families, do not take to these studies as there is no encouragement." [P : xx. Preface to the Six Systems of Indian Philosophy].

Another motive actuating us is our wish to stem the tide of materialism and vice [1] which by Western thought and Western habits (respectively) have unfortunalely contributed to upset the minds of the Indian youth, and the spiritual barrenness which it is producing by the pure secular modes of education pursued in this Country.[2] Says H. J. S. Cotton in his *New India* (1886):—

1. As to those, we can only refer the reader to the array of evidence collected by Pârthasârathi Yogi in his Suppl : IX on Hinduism, or Correspondence relating to a recent conversion Pp. 36-41 (1894).

2. (*a*) Rev. H. Rice, the London Mission Missionary testifies to this state of India in his "Helps to Truth Seekers" (1880) page 1. Preface :— "That such persons (i-e those who have been brought into contact with modern infidelity in its most popular phases) do exist, will not be questioned by those who have any acquaintance with educated Hindu Society, especially in large towns and cities, where the stream of atheistic and corrupting literature rushes with unabated force through the Govt. Offices and Colleges, bearing before it much of

"Still it is undoubtedly the case that, like the Roman Prefects of old, our Indian administrators have in general been careless about spiritual matters. The Government has, broadly speaking, exercised no influence whatever to induce the natives to become Christians, and the natives have responded to this indifference by showing no desire whatever to become converts to the State religion. When Hinduism ceases to be a living power in the minds of the young men who frequent our English schools and colleges, Christianity, rarely if ever, takes its place. The very fact of its profession by the foreign rulers of the country has been represented to me by native gentlemen as a valid reason for their aversion to it."

* * * *

Our State Colleges are content with chaos; their results are subversive only; the old belief is thrown off, the consequent disturbance issues in no real substitute, and the mental and moral state suffers from the negation." [P: 154] [1]

* * * *

"During my eighteen year's experience of Bengal I do not remember a single instance of the conversion of a respectable native gentleman to Christianity." [P: 159].

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the heart and genius of the rising generation of this country."

(b) Martin Luther complained similarly of Europe: 'Yea verily there have been men, but God's wrath, provoked by our sins, hath not judged us worthy to see and hear them; for it is well known that for a long time past such things have not been treated of in our universities, nay it has gone so far that the Holy Lord of God is not only laid on the shelf, but is almost mouldered away with dust and moths" [Theologica Germanica p. XV. Intro.]

(c) Only the other day His Lordship the Bishop Whitehead of Madras said in His Address, (Bangalore, 31st July 1901) :—That the general result of University Education in India has been to produce a very widespread unsettlement in matters of religious belief and a vast amount of religious indifference."

1. Our Hindu Youth may in this connection bear in their mind what was said of George Elliot, the Queen of Novelists: "While to undeveloped minds amongst us, inoculated with the teachings of free thought, the past of the human race appears as one dreary scene of folly or superstition, the powerful intellect of George Elliot is so impressed with the worth and importance of bygone ages that in her estimation religion and moral sympathy with the historical life of man is the larger half of culture" [Vide P 28 of Suppl: ix. to Hinduism by S. Pârthasârathi Yogi].

8. Theosophy has, however, for the last twenty years and more, exercised a very marked influence on the Hindu mind (not to mention the world-revolution it is causing); but whether it will leave a permanent mark in its aspect of professing to give something new, to the exclusion of old traditions of the Land, is a matter of doubt. We do not go so far in our misgivings of this movement as H. J. S. Cotton goes, when he says in the same work noted above that:—

"The subtleness of its teaching, and the degree of scope which the supernatural interference of spiritual, or so-called astral, phenomena afford to the imagination, are features peculiarly congenial to the Hindu intellect. A belief in the doctrines of Theosophy is consistent with the tenets of Brahmoism and even with the professions of orthodox Hinduism. The native mind has also been able to see that in some occult manner, but with a definiteness and force quite unmistakable, the European adherents of the system have been elevated by a kind of moral regeneration from indifferentism and sometimes from positive dislike, into sincere and hearty sympathy with the people of the country. The conditions have, therefore, been very favourable to the spread of Theosophy among natives. Tossed to and from by every blast of vain doctrine, they have rallied round the new-fangled ideas of this weird and obscure system with an eagerness which shows the need among them of a more rational and satisfying belief.' [Pp : 163-164 *Ibid.*]

But Mr. Cotton wrote anterior to the days of Mr. Annie Besant, whose advent into the field, we are able to say, has had the effect of curbing the rage for phenomena—be they 'alleged on credible testimony' or 'propped up by fraud'—and re-establishing the Hindu mind on the safer basis of its own Old Traditions, a practical demonstration of which has recently been afforded by the establishment of the Central Hindu College, Benares, though the Anglo-Indian sentiment towards it may still be one of suspicion. Revival and rehabilitation of Old Traditions

have thus a greater value [1]; and to such a loving task therefore we have addressed ourselves, albeit a small beginning.

9. This work contains precious pearls of truth, despite the present fast-going westernized generation's tendency to depreciate their worth, because of want of serious study, examination and reflection. This tendency to tear oneself from the past is dangerous inasmuch as one looses his moorings and drifts in a sea of bewildering doctrines of all kinds. Old Traditions, besides, have such a spiritual force associated with them that they readily commend themselves to our minds more than either hidden libraries in underground caverns, to which we have no access, or the so called Âkâṣic records which are far removed from the ordinary senses possessed by mankind; or those modern spiritualistic *seances* which resort to darkness for their manifestations.

(1) The value to us Hindus of our own Traditions may be easily estimated by the value they possess even in the eyes of such foreign men as Schopenhaur. Max Muller said: 'Whatever other people may say about the misguided men who sacrificed everything to the Veda, I still count the Veda among my best friends and I sometimes regret that my duties as Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Oxford should, during my later years, have withdrawn my full allegiance to it'. [Vol I. Indian Review, p. 533]. This ought to produce a shame in us who have, in our zeal for foreign things, forgotten our allegiance to our own, have denationalized ourselves, and have lost all respect in the eyes of the foreigners, which we would, by remaining faithful to our own, have preserved in our own as well as in their eyes. In a letter to us, D. 26-8-95, our Guru Pârthasârathi Yogi writes:—"You study other Vedas without first doing justice to the particular Veda to the study of which you have received a particular calling, just as you have been appointed to be born at a particular time and place, as a son of particular parents, a subject of a particular Government and speaking a particular mother-tongue, with particular aptitudes and opportunities, under the laws of organism, heredity and environment. You would commit in the eye of the law the offence of a 'Ṣâkhâ-raṇḍa' (Adulterer)." Cp: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." [John: X. 1].

10. Besides old, these Traditions possess further the charm of treatment by a wealth of happy illustrations. Thus the otherwise bitter capsules of spiritual truth are administered, covered over with the sugar of anecdotes and acts and conversations of the saints and sages who figure therein.

11. The Traditions then, as now presented, claim high descent from saints and sages who have lived from time to time and whose chief exponent was the great Râmânuja, who is described as the central Gem (*Nâyaka-maṇi*) in the Garland of that Hierarchy.[1] Even in his days, the old Traditions were found to be lapsing into obscurity, but he came to rescue them for posterity. We owe to him all that we possess. The impulse given by this Mahâtma to the revival of religion and letters was such that not only did the old Traditions see light, but these were commented and popularised by his co-workers and spiritual descendants for a long time after, so that all have easy access to them now in the vernacular languages of the country. Had it not been for Râmânuja, the present book for example would never have been. Modern scholars are just beginning to appreciate him and his work. It would not therefore be out of place to add one or two such testimonies with regard to this veteran Divine Messiah of the Bhakti-School. No one could profess to have an adequate idea of this, unless his life and all his teachings were known. (One of these testimonies, it may be noted, bears directly too on the Drâvidian Literature).

(*a*). *Romesh Chunder Dutt:—*

"A succession of Hindu religious reformers rose from the eleventh to the nineteenth century, repeating to the listening millions the lessons of

1. Cp. "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." "I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." [John XV. 1 & 5].

the past, and turning their hearts to the living God, who ministered to the needs of his creatures in their sorrow and in their sufferings."

" Râmânuja was the first of this glorious band of modern Hindu Reformers. He lived in Southern India in the eleventh century; he proclaimed the unity of God under the name of Vishṇu; and he preached the love of God as the way to salvation. Sectarian opposition compelled him to fly from his own country; like other prophets he was honoured outside his country; and in Mysore he converted the king and the people to his own faith and established seven hundred monasteries, dedicated to the faith of Vishṇu." [*The Faiths of Ancient India*, contributed to the Humanitarian, July 1900].

(*b*). *M. Rangâcharlu* :—

" His (Râmânuja's) regard for and reconciliation of the Drâvidian Vedas with Samskrit Upanishads is an attempt made in the right direction, to infuse life and worth into the Vernacular Dialects. His plan of mixing Tamil with Samskrit is a novel method of literary composition (called *maṇi-pravâla*) designed for the attraction of readers. His display of psychic powers is the result of his notions that Indians are prone to attach greater value to psychic development than to scholarship and philosophic acumen. Viewed from all standpoints (apart from the consideration that Râmânuja is an Avatâra—*Vide*, para 14. P.xiv. Preface to our Gîtâ—) Râmânuja appears to have been a profound philosopher, a noble ornament of the Âryan race, a philanthropic leader of mankind, a wise reformer of extreme moral excellence. This we think is the unanimous verdict of the present generations, of a noble life passed away from the midst of our ancestors eight centuries ago." [P. 17. *Life and Teachings of Râmânuja*].

(*c*). Annie Besant's " The Three Paths ", " the Anniversary Lectures on Avatâras " and the Article on " *Devotion* " in the Theos: Review, referring to the greatness of Râmânuja; Dr. Thebaut's Vedânta Sûtras, and Max Muller's Six Systems of Indian Philosophy all testify to Râmânuja's Greatness.[1]

12. ' God is Love,' as G. J. Romanes said. But more than such a God was Râmânuja's God, whom, as described and reveal-

1 Another testimony from the manager, Astrological Magazine, Mr B. Sûryanârâyaṇa Row B. A., F. R. H. S.; M. R. A. S., M. A. S. B. which has just arrived (his letter d: 26-11-90), we are happy to add here:—"Your Şri-Gîtâ appears to be splendidly worked out and you have rightly laid the Râmânuja-community under special, and the world

ed by all the love-saints that went before him,—the monarch of whom was Nammâzhvâr—did Râmânuja proclaim to the world from the tops of temple-towers. His message to man was the inalienability of the relation between God and soul, in its several aspects of love. The main feature of his reform consisted in the declaration of God, not as cold, but as very loving. The words of Max Muller, which may be taken as the mature final verdict resulting from his years of prior deliberations, and which are voiced forth in his last and latest work: 'The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,' confirm this. Says he on page 245 of the said work:—

"We ought, therefore, to look on Râmânuja as a perfect equal of Şaṅkara, so far as his right of interpreting Bâdarâyaṇa's Sûtras, according to his opinion, is concerned. It is the same here as everywhere in Hindu philosophy. The individual philosopher is but the mouth-piece of tradition, and that tradition goes back further and further, the more we try to fix it chronologically. While Şankara's system is Advaita, i.e. absolute Monism, that of Râmânuja has been called Viṣishṭa-Advaita, the doctrine of unity with attributes or monism with a difference. Of course, with Râmânuja also, Brahman is the highest reality, omnipotent, omniscient, but this Brahman is at the same time full of compassion or love. This is a new and very important feature in Râmânuja's Brahman as compared with the icy self-sufficiency ascribed to Brahman by Şaṅkara. Even more important and more humanising is the recognition that souls as individuals possess reality, that Chit and Achit, what perceives and what does not perceive, soul and matter, forming as it were, the body of Brahman, are in fact modes (Prakâra) of Brahman."

'*This is a new feature*,' are Prof: Max Muller's words, but they are liable to be misunderstood. He must be taken to mean that this feature of the Vedânta is not *new*, but had failed to

under general, obligation by bringing before the public the commentaries of that Great Teacher Şrî Râmânujâchârya, who deserves to be much better known than he is at present among the Western Philosophers. It is always difficult to realize the splendour of their intellects by those who are far below them in intellectual eminence."

receive proper treatment at the hands of monistic philosophers, and it was left to Râmânuja to expound and declare the same. For the doctrine of a Loving God is as old as the Vedas. Not to cite many passages, one alone from the Rig-Veda [ix-32-5] says, that love between God and souls is as fervid as between a lover and his beloved:—

योषाजारमिवप्रियम् ॥ [1]

13. This work, *viz.*, the Divine Wisdom of Drâvida Saints will be seen further to prominently teach that *Grace* of God alone is the sole means of salvation; as somewhat hazily taught by Jesus, or Augustine after him, or the Muslim Sûfi;—to this Doctrine the Ṣaivas alone approaching very closely. That this is *not* a new doctrine, not found in the Vedânta, but only promulgated by Râmânuja as a new doctrine, and contradictive therefore of the findings of his predecessor Ṣaṅkara, is evident from the summing up of Pârthasârathi Yogi, given on pages 5 and 6 of his Benedictions of 1895. Thus he writes:—

" Grace on the part of God, whence all began
To flow : devotion on the part of man,
Souls godly, as their *summum bonum*, hold.
The same truth is in sim'lar language told,

1. (*a*) It is a sorry fact that Orientalists like Edward Gough M. A., and Divines like Rev. C. Cooper have persistently represented to the world, in their Philosophy of the Upanishads, the cold and inert nature of Brahman as taught in the Upanishads. They have persistently ignored to hear Râmânuja, nor have they discovered for themselves that their own Christian demand for a *righteous* God is fully met by such passages as "*apahata-pâpmâ*" &c. and God as *love* by such passages as "*Ânando Brahmeti vyajânât*" &c.

(*b*). But the latest Advaita-exponent, Vivekânanda (whose death the whole world is mourning to-day) said :—" Ṣankara with his great intellect had not, I am afraid, as great a heart. Râmânuja's heart was greater. He felt for the downtrodden, he sympathized with them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered, made them pure so far as could be, and instituted new ceremonies, new methods of worship for the people who absolutely required these. At the same time he opened the

E'en now in Ṣaṅkarâchârya's Pudukota speech[1] :—
So doth Mahâ-Nârâyana Upanishad teach ;
And also, Gitâ-Lecture Fifteen, fifteenth verse,
And well-known Gâyattri, in words both sweet and terse.
Dvivedi then, should consider if he may not
Recant th' abuse found in the sentences I quote
And which he tells us all, he as Advaiti wrote."[2]

'Yet, brethern,' says the Yôgi, '*bhakti*, *smriti* and *prasâda* are the very words used in the speech of Ṣankarâchârya just cited by me ; in the Kaṭha: Up. II. 20 ; in the Ṣvetâṣvatara Up. III. 27, VI. 23 ; in the Mahà-Nârâyaṇa Up. VIII. 3 ; and in the Gîtâ, XVIII. 56, 58, 62, 73 ; VIII. 10, 22 ; IX. 14, 26, 29 ; XIII. 10 ; XVIII. 54, 55, 68 ; XII. 17, 19 ; and even in the first Ṣaṅkarâchârya's well-known hymn, the prominent idea of which is contained in the words ; "*Bhaja Govindam, mûdha mate.*" i e., to Govind or 'God come on earth,' devote thyself, O fool !"

door to the highest spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah."—*Brahmavâdin* p. 494. Vol, VII. 1902].

1. *Hindu*, Madras, dated. 5-4-99.

2. The reference here is to page 328, Barrow's Praliament of Religions :—" The one old teaching was the idea of the All, usually known as the Advaita or the Vedânta. In the ethical aspect of this philosophy, stress has been laid on knowledge (gnosis) and free action. Under the debasing influence of a foreign yoke, these sober paths of knowledge and action had to make room for devotion and grace. On devotion and grace as their principal ethical tenets, three important schools of philosophy arose in the period after the Purâṇas. Besides the ancient Advaita, we have the Dvaita, the Viṣuddhâdvaita, and the Viṣishtâdvaita *schools of Philosophy in this* period. The first is purely dualistic, postulating the separate yet co-ordinate existence of mind and matter. The second and third profess to be unitarian, but in a considerably modified sense of the word. The Viṣuddhâdvaita teaches the unity of the cosmos, but it insists on the All, having certain attributes, which endow it with the desire to manifest itself as the cosmos. The third system is purely dualistic though it goes by the name of modified unitarianism. It maintains the unity of chit (soul), achit (matter), and Îṣvara (God), each in its own sphere, the third member of this trinity governing all and pervading the whole though not apart from the cosmos. Thus widely differing in their philosophy from the Advaita, these three Sampradâyas [or streams of "tradition] teach a system of ethics entirely opposed to the one taught in that ancient school called Dharma in the Advaita. They

14. Watching the signs of the times, we are aware of the ardent wish which on all sides is expressed for better and better conceptions of God. This want arises from a persistent ignorance of the past, for such conceptions of the Deity have already been vouchsafed to yearning hearts like the Saints, but which have failed to be reached by the highest flights of modern thought. For example, Rev: E. J. Fripp B.A., in the concluding paragragh of his obituary of Rev: Dr. Martineau, the great thinker of the age, says with regard to his philosophy and with regard to the new conceptions of the Deity which this scientific age hungers after, that:

" But rightly interpreted, a philosophy that teaches the divine in all souls, that reveals the authority for good in every heart and conscience, and proclaims in a new and deep sense the Fatherhood of God to all men and women .... is the recognition of universal rights and sacred obligations compared with which the rights and obligations of possession, blood, race, rank, and education are altogether secondary. The religious future is with those who feel and utter this, and make great sacrifices for it. But in order to do this, something further is required. *We want a new conception of God, the Father Himself.* We have discovered that we are children of the Highest; but what is He? Not a benevolent Being who has put us here on probation and calls on us from the height of His superiority to overcome evil which baffles our thought, but a Being who

displace *jñâna* by *bhakti*, and *karma* by *prasâda*; that is to say, in other words, place the highest happiness in obtaining the grace of God by entire devotion, physical, mental, moral and spiritual."

It may be incidentally remarked here that the so-called solar path of "gnosis," which demands a disillusionizing on the part of man that he is not what he *is*, but *God*, makes all morality unnecessary, murder a virtue, and moral responsibility a huge bug-bear as an Advaiti gentleman himself wrote [Vide p 293 ff Vol I. Christian College Magazine]. But the path of Love to God as pointed out by Râmânuja is the greatest incentive to virtue, and points man out to be a morally responsible and spiritual being in addition to the great back-ground of emotion guiding him in every aspiration. When man and the universe are ever moved by emotion, the spirit of a cold and loveless Brahman becomes a mere impossibility. No one with a heart throbbing can possibly conceive such an Entity.

is Himself the heart of all this groaning world, *of* it, and *in* it and *agonizing for it*, a supreme and infinite Here who summons us to work and triumph with Him, to rise again perpetually to higher life. A God who does not Himself suffer is not the God of this creation, nor can He command the enthusiastic devotion of men. To make self-sacrifices, we must worship Infinite Self-sacrifice."

It causes us great surprise that even after centuries of intercourse between the East and the West, the conception of God as the Indian Vedânta has from eternity proclaimed forth to the world and which the Drâvida Saints have reiterated loudly in their turn,—the conception of God, which according to these saints is not a mere weaving of their human fancy, but one that is actually realized by the passing of their consciousness into the realms of the spirit, the very *sanctum sanctorum* of the purified heart—should yet have escaped comprehension by the Western mind, as may be judged from Rev. Fripp's confession aforesaid. Take the idea of the "Sacrifice of God" for example. Shall we cite the Purusha-Sûkta, Vishṇu Purâṇa,[1] and Hari-vamṣa [2] &c., representing God as the *Universal* Sacrifice? Shall we cite the Ṣvetâṣvataropanishad &c., representing Him as the *Mother*-Father? Shall we cite Taittirîyopanishad &c., representing Him as He who *dwells in every heart*? Shall we cite Râmâyaṇa &c., revealing Him as more *agonizing* for the sorrows of mortals than they for themselves can? Shall we cite all the Prabandhas, or ravishing Divine Experiences of St. Nammâzhvâr and other Saints of the Drâviḍ Land, representing Him as *loving us infinitely* more, or as much more indeed as He is greater than our little selves? To cite thus would now be prolix. But let the readers refer for example to the several Topics of the work we are now introducing to them and ponder

1. See I-4 for symbolic interpretations, treating of the Sacrifice-Boar of Vishṇu for example.

2. See *Harivamṣa, 1st Division,* 42nd Chapter, treating of the Sacrifice-Boar and also the universal Sacrificial nature of Vishṇu Himself;

over the ideas contained therein. For their benefit we transcribe one verse taken from St. Nammâzhvâr, and give its free paraphrase :—

*ஈசன் வானவர்க்கென்ப னென்றால்*அது*
*தேசமோ திருவேங்கடத்தானுக்கு**
*நீசனேன் நிறைவொன்று மிலேன்*என்கண்*
பாசம்வைத்த பரஞ்சுடர்ச் சோதிக்கே.

[T. V. Mozhi. III. 3.4.]

" Holy Lord of the Hill of Venkâtachalam ! If Thou art the Lord of but the celestials, what glory doth that give Thee ? Who careth for such a Lord (*there*, not *here*) ? If Thou art the Lord of Heaven surrounded by Angels, Thy Light and their light all mingle into one light, and Thou art thus not singled out in glory. But Thy light in the midst of our darkness, *here* alone, can so much the more bright be ; nay, the more glorified be by the back-ground, we present, of darkness ! Not by Thy Majesty art Thou great, but by Thy Grace, by Thy Condescension to us ! Not for Thy might art Thou adored, but by Thy Grace to Thy humble creatures, sunk in sorrow ! With Thee as unapproachable, unattainable and invisible, concern we have none ; but with Thee as the nearest, dearest and most patent to our heart and understanding is our concern ! With us *here*, hast Thou full scope for Thy Grace; there in Heaven, none ! Set then Thine eyes on my abject self here ; become the Way to the wayless ! Thus alone canst Thou be God indeed ! "

Nor has the Western Thinker as yet fully realised the Deity in the aspect of Avatâras, or Incarnations, recognised but recently by such thinkers as Cardinal Newman, as the Doctrine purely original with the Hindus and adopted by the Christians.

15. In this work much light is also thrown on the point whether God is a mere *Principle* or *Person*. That He is certainly both, is Râmânuja's decision, based on the Scriptures of the Saints and Sages preceding Him.

Râmânuja, like his Holy Guru Yâmunâchârya, showed the impossibility of conceiving abstract Deity by the human mind, as it is constituted, for :—

अर्थैनैवविशेषोहि निराकारतयाधियाम् ॥

" By concrete pictures alone is our otherwise indefinite consciousness rendered definite; in other words, what is formless is by such pictures rendered into form."

He contended that the attempt to conceive Diety as an *Abstract Essence* is simply an impossibility. And it is not only our intellectual nature to which such a conception is impossible, but our moral nature also revolts from it. We believe that God holds an important personal relation to ourselves; He is our Creator, our Father, our Judge. We cannot think of these relations except as belonging to a Being who is most intimately linked to us. The idea therefore of an abstract, absolute, inconceivable Essence is impossible, and incompatible with ideas of relations such as those of Creater, Father, Judge, Donor &c., So called absoluteness as being the highest logical abstraction is to Râmânuja inconceivable and illogical and endangers God's very existence. Further, we cannot know or conceive of an abstraction as divorced from every kind of relation. The relation of things is absolutely essential to knowledge. And again, this abstract Being cannot be God, because it cannot be a Cause; for as abstract, it cannot hold relations with concrete things; it is perfectly empty of all qualities, and therefore destitute of every thing which makes up man's idea of the Divine Being.

16. It is on such philosophical arguments, the several Holy Shrines extant in India have been instituted; and God is made visible therein in Forms emblematic of the several relations in which He stands to His Universe and His creatures dwelling therein. All the Saints and Sages paid their homage

here and realised God therein. One Form of Vishṇu, for example, stands as the Symbol for many Universal Truths combined:—His *Kaustubha*-gem is the *chit*-part of His body, or the multitude of souls. The *Ṣrîvatsa* mark is the *achit*-part or the sum of non-intelligent material existences. The *conch-shell* and the *bow* stand for the two-fold division of egotism. The *discus* stands for mind and motion. The necklace *Vaijayanti* is made up of the pearl, ruby, emerald, sapphire and diamond—the emblems of the five elements. The sword *Nandaka* represents knowledge, sheathed in the *scabbard* of ignorance; and so on.[1]

17. This work goes forth with our prayer that as religious truths are there shown as universal, harmony may for ever be established between man and man, for: "Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove and to correct, and to instruct which is in righteousness" [2 Tim. iii—16]. That 'the theology of the Twentieth Century will probably be a composite of the different explanations of differing schools of sincere thought put together by the sympathetic combining mind', is the prophetic utterance of Rev. W. W. Peyton [p. 715, Contemp: Review for May 1900.] Though no country has been denied the privilege of producing Saints, some countries have by Providence been specially permitted to claim possession of the most illustrious among them, to exercise such world-wide influence as to bring as many as possible of His straying flock back to His fold. The wisdom of this work is mainly based on the work of one such Saint, Nammâzhvâr, called Tiruvây-Mozhi or Dramiḍopanishad; and its learned commentaries written under the inspiration and impulse given to religious thought, righteousness and love by Ṣrî Râmânujâchârya.

1. *Read Bhâgavata* XII. 11; and *Introduction to our* "*Holy Lives of* the Âzhvârs," Symbology, p. 1 ff; and Topic 171, p. 195 ff.

18. Finally, we must warn our Christian Brethren against falling into the error of supposing that the sublime Doctrines of Faith, Grace, Love, Salvation by mediation, and by atonement, Motherhood of God, Image-Worship, Incarnation-Doctrine &c. held by ancient Saints of India, must have been borrowed from Christian Scriptures, as Dr. Lorinser imagined Bhagavad-gîtâ as a borrowal from the Bible! That the former is as much an anachronism as the latter is a gratuitous assumption, has been proved beyond all doubt, inasmuch as Lord Krishna antedates Jesus by nearly three thousand years.[1] And

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1 (*a*) Professor Duncker, after duly considering the matter, says that 'it is not impossible that the 32 reigns which the Matsya Purâṇa gives to the Bârhadrathas, may have filled up the time from the year 1418 to the year 803 B. C.' and that Parîkshit commenced his reign in the former year." This negatives all possibility of the teaching of Kṛishna (who belonged to the generation that preceded Parîkshit) having been borrowed from any Christian source." [S. Pârtha sârathi Yogi's Supplement ix. on Hinduism p : 26]

(*b*) The story of the Mahâbhârata was extant in the time of Pâṇini, the great grammarian who flourished in the 12th or 13th century, B. C., when neither the Upanishads nor the Brâhmaṇas of the Vedas are said to have yet been reduced to writing. '*Gavi yudhibhyâm sthirah*' [Pâṇini. viii. 3·95] refers to Yudhiṣṭhira. '*Striyâm avanti Kunti Kurubhyah* [Id,iv. I. 76] refers to Kuntî, Yudhisthira's 'mother.' '*Vâsudevârjunâbhyâmvun*' [iv-3-98] *refers to Arjuna* and Vâsudeva (=Krishna) &c, &c, &c, [P. 45 of Hinduism, Ancient and Modern, by Lala Baijnath. B. A.]

(*c*) The date of the great War, according to the Hindu chronology goes farther than five thousand years. But the date acknowledged by all the Oriental Scholars falls in the 14th cent. B. C. Happily we have some accounts of trustworthy historial records which with other proofs corroborate the latter as nearly accurate. We know for certain that Bimbasâra of Magadha, the contemporary of Buddha and the 52nd in descent from Jarâsandha connected with the great War, lived in the 5th cent. B. C. If we allow an average period of 20 years for the reign of each of the 51 kings, the Great War must have taken place in the 15th cent. B. C. and at any rate, it may be established that it is not after the 14th century B.C. [Foot note, p. 160, Vol. IV, Siddhânta-Dipikâ].

(*d*) See Foot note 2 Page 6, Introduction I, ', Five Topics" by Pârthasârathi Yogi.

our Saint Nammâzhvâr was born just forty-three days after the Ascension of Krishna.[1] To silence all critics finally on this unjust charge of plagiarism, which the West is so fond of imputing to the East, we shall satisfy ourselves by quoting one paragraph from an eminent scholar of the West itself, Samuel Johnson. He says in his Oriental Religions, p. 101, Vol. II:—

"In like manner the discovery by Christian scholars, in their study of Hindu Religion, of what they may regard as faint heathen "foregleams and dim presentiments of Christian truths,"—such as trinity, atonement by the saint for the sinner, and salvation by the merits of the saint,—justifies no expectation that the *Christian* forms of these beliefs, as "based on truth instead of dream," must be recognized by the heathen mind as that for which it was yearning, and for which its way has been prepared. The resemblances simply show that, even as believers in such conceptions and doctrinal forms, the Hindus can satisfy their desire through their own sacred books, legends and dogmatic constructions, without resorting to the Christian."[2]

How unjust, in the face of such array of facts, it is, on the part of Christian Authors, to write against the Hindus, in such terms as the following, will be plain to every impartial reader:—

"We hold that the theology of nature (Hindooism) sheds powerful light on the being of a God; and even from its unaided demonstrations we can reach a considerable degree of probability, both for His moral and natural attributes. But when it undertakes the question between God and man, this is what it finds to be impracticable. It is baffled in all its attempts to decipher the state, and the prospects of man, viewed in the

1. See our Holy Lives of Saints, Introd. "*The Age &c.*"

2 The reader may peruse the most interesting collection of evidence on this point made by our Veteran Brother Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Row, in his article on 'Vedic Religion,' in the Ârya, Madras. Vol I.

relation of an offending subject, to an offended sovereign. In a word, its chief obscurity, and which it is wholly unable to disperse, is that which rests on the hopes and the destiny of our species. There is in it enough of manifestation to awaken the fears of 'guilty' but not enough again to appease them. It emits and audibly emits a note of terror, but in vain do we listen for one authentic word of comfort, from any of its oracles. It is able to see the danger, but not the deliverance. It can excite the forebodings of the human spirits, but cannot quell them, knowing just enough to stir the perplexity at rest. It can state the difficulty, but cannot unriddle the difficulty, having just as much knowledge as to ennunciate the problem, but not so much as might lead to the solution of the problem. There must be a measure of light, we do allow; like the lurid gleam of a valcano, it is not a light which guides, but which bewilders and terrifies. It prompts the question but cannot furnish or frame the reply. Natural (Hindoo) theology may see as much as shall draw forth the anxious interrogation :—"What shall I do to be saved!" The answer to this, comes from a higher theology." [Bridge Water Treatises. Vol. II. P. 285.]

But read this Ancient Wisdom and recall such ignorant and unjust impeachments.

THE DIVINE WISDOM

OF

THE DRAVIDA SAINTS,

Ṣrî-mate Nârâyaṇâya † namaḥ.*

'Sole for the Gracious * All †, I am,
For me or mine, I never am.'

TOPIC 1.

What is True Renunciation?

What doth 'Renunciation' mean? Is it possible to renounce the world? Is it possible to annihilate the world? Neither is possible; for in order to renounce the world, one must pass beyond its bounds; and in order to annihilate the world, one must be able to annihilate God's work! But it may be suggested that renouncement could be effected by fleeing away from the haunts of men where ills abound, and living in a forest in solitude where no temptations could come to molest. To this method of renunciation, however, the episodes of Âdi-Bharata (or Jaḍa-Bharata)[1] and of Saubhari[2] prove contrary. For, the former, though he had renounced the world and was residing in the woods, was inveigled into ties of affection for a deer, and had consequently to migrate into the form of a deer. The latter (Saubhari), though he had abandoned the world and had lived a recluse in the wilderness, was, when he once went to

* This is a short rendering of Ṣrî. On Motherhood of God, *vide infra Topic 17*.

[Also read Note XIII on the Bride or Parâ-Ṣakti, p. lxxxii. Dr. Pope's Tiruvâchakam.]

† A short rendering of Nârâyaṇa.

1 For the story of Jaḍa-Bharata, consult Vishṇu-Purâṇa, II-31; and also Bhâgavata.

2 For the story of Saubhari, refer to Vishṇu-Purâṇa IV. 2, and also Bhâgavata; and also read a psychical discussion on this theme in Lokâchârya's Tatva-traya,-Chit-prakaraṇa [Pârthasârathi Yogi's edition.]

bathe in a pond, tempted into admiring the worldly life which a mother-fish with its numerous progeny—playfully surrounding her—led therein. Heart thus lured, he entered into married life. So, true renunciation[1] is not secured by such bodily displacements. True renunciation is of the mind. It consists in giving up the erroneous notions of 'I' and 'mine', inhering in the mind, as St. Nammâzhvâr[2] taught: [Dramiḍopanishad or Tiruvâimozhi: I, 2-3.]

'நீர்நுமதென்றிவை
வேர்முதல் மாய்த்திறை
சேர்மின்.'

'The errors of 'I-ness,' 'My-ness,'
With roots pluck out, and join the Lord.'

'I-ness' consists in misapprehending 'body' for 'soul.' 'My-ness' consists in misapprehending all belongings appertaining to the body as soul's own. Renunciation consists in the mind disengaging itself from these errors[1]. Examples of such mental renunciation are found in King Janaka and Saint Kulaṣekhara[2] as follow:—

Ṣuka Ṛishi was once giving spiritual instruction to King Janaka and other Ṛishis congregated in the King's palace. Ṣuka all the time directed his glances to the King and not to the others. The others attributed this behaviour of Ṣuka to worldly motives on his part in order to insinuate himself into

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1 Read the following verses defining true renunciation.

वनेपिदोषाः प्रभवन्ति रागिणां ।
गृहेषु पञ्चेन्द्रिय निग्रहस्तपः ।
अकुत्सिते कर्मणि यःप्रवर्तते ।
निवृत्तरागस्य गृहं तपो वनम् ॥

[Itihâsa-samucchaya: 13th: Adh.]

Read the most interesting Chapters II & III of Theologia Germanica by S. Winkworth. In Ch. XV it is written: 'A man should so stand free being quit of himself, that is, of his I and Me and Self and Mine, and the like, that in all things he should no more seek or regard himself than if he did not exist, &c.'

2 For the place these Royal Saints occupy in the Heirarchy, refer to table annexed at end of introduction to this work.

the good graces of the King, and thus to obtain from him worldly goods for his own benefit. Ṣuka read into their thoughts, and in order to vindicate Janaka's spiritual superiority over them all, and thus to justify his own particular attention to him, employed a test. He produced an illusion in which the Ṛishis[1] assembled saw Mithila, the capital city of Janaka, as well as their own retreats in the suburbs, in flames. Thereon the Ṛishis in panic ran in different directions; one crying: "Oh! my water jug is gone;" another: "Alas! My deer-skin is burnt;" another: "My God! my poor robes have been done to ashes;" yet another: "Lo! My couch has disappeared" and so on. Whereas King Janaka sat in perfect unconcern and composure, and though he espied all his Nine Treasures devoured by fire, before his very eyes, he yet quietly exclaimed: "If Mithila is burnt, it is Mithila burnt. What is it to me?"[2] The Ṛishis, on the other hand, who flew to their retreats, found to their astonishment nothing burnt, but returned to Ṣuka with heads bent down for shame.

'Do ye now see, Brethren,' said Ṣuka "the reason for my particular attentions to Janaka? His, indeed, is true renunciation.'

Saint Kulaṣekhara, (the King) also sung his true renunciation in his Perumâḷ Tirumozhi thus:—

"ஊனேறு செல்வத்துடற்பிறவி யான் வேண்டேன்."

'Desire I not bodily births
Which pamper to the wants of flesh' [IV. 1].

"இன்பமறுஞ் செல்வமு மிவ்வரசும் யான்வேண்டேன்.

'Desire I not delights of sense
Nor Sov'reignty ov'r all this earth' [IV. 5].

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1 Means sages and saints.

2 *Vide* Mahâ - bhâ : Moksha-Dharma. 103. 4; which says:—
' मिथिलायां प्रदग्धायां
न मे किञ्चित्प्रदह्यते '

Also read Mahopanishad, 2nd Adhyâya about Janaka's greatness.

Saint Nammâzhvâr himself exclaimed:—

"யானே யென்னை யறியகிலாதே
யானே யென்றனதேயென்றிருந்தேன்."

'Myself, I, not understanding,
Labourèd under 'I' and 'mine'[1].

[Bhagavad-Vishaya, Bk. I, p. 79. Introduction].[2]

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[1] Cp. 'Who lays conceit that utters 'I' and 'Mine,' shall enter realms above the powers divine. [Pope's Kurral, 346].

[2] Consider the following reflections on this theme:—

(*a*) Cp. Bhâgavata, V. I. where Brahmâ preaches King Priyavrata thus:—

भयं प्रमत्तस्य वनेष्वपिस्यात् ।
यतस्स आस्ते सहषद् सपत्नः ।
जितेन्द्रियस्यात्मरतेर्बुधस्य
गृहाश्रमः किन्नु करोत्यवद्यम् ॥ १७ ॥
यष्षट्सपत्नान् विजिगीषमाणो
गृहेषु निर्विश्य यतेत पूर्वं ।
अत्येतिदुर्गाश्रित ऊर्जितारीन्
क्षीणेषु कामं विचरेद्विपश्चित् ॥ १८ ॥
त्वं त्वब्जनाभाङ्घ्रि सरोजकोश
दुर्गाश्रितो निर्जित षट् सपत्नः ।
भुंक्ष्वेहभोगान् पुरुषातिदिष्टान्
विमुक्त संगः प्रकृतिं भजस्व ॥ १९ ॥

(*b*) The whole of Bhagavad-Gitâ is a discourse on what true renunciation consists in. Among others, meditate on the verse: [III, 22].

न मेपार्थास्तिकर्तव्यं त्रिषुलोकेषु किंचन ।
नानवाप्त मवाप्तव्यं वर्त एवचकर्मणि ॥

(*c*) 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also he cannot be my disciple' [Luke: XIV-26].

Commentary on this: The law of Christ does not allow us to *hate* even our enemies, much less our parents; but the meaning of the text is that we must be in that disposition of soul as to be willing to renounce and part with every thing how near or dear soever it may be to us, that would keep us from following Christ.

(*d*) 'This therefore, I say, brethren: the time is short, it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none.' 29.

'And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not.' 30.

'And they that use this world as if they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away.' 31.

'But I would have you to be without solicitude.' 32.

[1 Cor., VII.]

(*e*) The riddles contained in the following sayings are with reference to renunciation and self-sacrifice:—

(1) 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.' [John, XII., 25.]

(2) 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

[Matt., XVI., 24.]

(3) 'Die and re-exist, for until this is accomplished thou art but a troubled guest upon an earth of gloom.' [German Goethe.]

(*f*) (1) 'The more the Self, the I, the Me, the Mine, *i.e.*, self-seeking and selfishness abate in a man, the more doth God's I, *i.e.*, God Himself, increase in him.'

[Theo. Germ., Ch. XV.]

(2) In other ways, renunciation of the mind means the surrendering of one's own will to God's. In Theologia Germanica,[P.XXXVIII, Intro.] it is written: 'Self-renunciation,—the complete giving up of self-will to the will of God.'

TOPIC 2.

The Natural Relation between God and Souls as between Lcrd and Leige.

"And me, His[1] sweet perfections drew
To follow as His[1] servant true."

[Râmâyaṇa IV., 4., 11½.]

The above is part of Lakshmaṇa's speech to Hanumân in the Kishkindhâ-Kâṇḍa, in reply to the latter's inquiry as to who they were and why they came to the forest.

Lakshmaṇa :—Râma comes to the forest (for fourteen years) to fulfil as a dutiful son ought, the command of his father Daṣaratha. Sîtâ follows him as a faithful wife. Râma thinks that I follow him as but an ordinary follower, induced merely by my kinship to him as his younger brother.

Hanumân :—But, what are *thy* motives in following him?

Lakshmaṇa :—I follow Him, because I am *not mine but His* (=*paravân asmi*)[2]; and this union (as of subject and predicate) is further confirmed by the Divine perfections of His character captivating me to Himself. From the relation of this love of union, of esteem and of admiration, proceeds my service to Him,—service such that the natural rights Râma has of buying and selling me, demand.

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1. *i. e.*, Râma's.

2. This corresponds nearly to the Biblical expression:—"Of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things." [Rom. XI, 36]. R. Harvey, M.A., L.L.D., in his article "The Place of Agnosticism in Religion, p. 141, Vol. I. Christian College Magazine" says:—"And if we will only fairly, steadily, and reverently attend to and meditate upon the order of reality (*viz.*, the inner order of consciousness, of righteousness, holiness, &c., inflowing into it from a Being), to which these elements (righteousness, holiness, truth, &c.) belong, we shall, I feel confident, find that it will assume a majesty and authority before which our spirits will bow in humble adoration, and a reality before which all other realities will pale. It will more and more be seen to be *the one eternal and necessary Being and all else to exist for His sake only.*"

Thus do I stand to Him, not in the mere relation of co-born brother (as he thinks), but as leige, vassal, servant to him;—as his sole possession having the character of disposability as may suit His sovereign will and pleasure.[1]

[*Vide* Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 97: "Uyarvara." I, 1. 1.][2]

TOPIC 3.

God of Bliss and Love, or God of Attributes.

St. Parâṅkuṣa (Nammâzhvâr)[3] characterises God as one with perfections (*nalam*), all of the nature of bliss and love.[4] In the course of conversation, Ṣrî-vatsâṅka-miṣra (Âzhvân)[5]

1 This is illustrative of the fundamentals of the disinterested lover of God, demanded of all who are of the faith of Râmânuja, and embodied in the Holy Eight-Syllabled Mantra (*vide infra* Topic 14).

Tauler says: 'Much more we must scorn all idea of reward, that we may love God only because He is the Supreme Good.'

[P. lv. Theologia Germanica.]

Cp: 'The Maker justly claims the world He made:

'In this the right of Providence is laid.' [Parnell's Hermit.]

2 These refer to the Cento, Decad and Verse of Saint Nammâzhvâr's Tiruvâimozhi. [Read his life.]

3 *Vide* Hierarchic Table.

4 God intrinsically gloried with (*a*) knowledge and (*b*) bliss. (*a*) and (*b*) are the primary attributes characterising the Godhead. They are the chief qualities, indicative of His essence as (*c*) Being. (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) thus correspond to the Christian Trinity: (*a*) Son, (*b*) Holy *Ghost, and (c)* Father. St. Francis de Sales writes in his "Treatise on Love of God" thus:—

"In the holy and undivided Trinity, the Son [=the eternal word (Veda) incarnate] is engendered by the Father (Sat) and is the term of his *knowledge* (Chit) [hence the Father is the *Veda-purusha*]; the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is the term of their mutual *love* (Ânanda):" Thus ponder over the epithet *Sat-Chit-Ânanda* applied to the Godhead.

Also *vide* pp. 6, 7 & 221, English translation (by the author) of Râmânuja's Commentaries on Bhagavad-Gîtâ.

Also read Dr. F. W. Faber's "Creator and the Creature," pp. 387 to 391, Ch. IV, Bk. iii.

Also read Tatva-traya by Pârthasârathi Yogi. p. 193. and J. M. Nallasâmi's 'Light of Grace,' p. 8, Note 2.

5 The first and chief disciple of Râmânuja, [*vide* Hierarchic Table.]

addressed Piḷḷaip-piḷḷai thus:—Is it not matter for congratulation that on St. Parâṅkuṣa's authority, we have a God of attributes; which ought to silence all those who philosophise on a God *devoid* of attributes?! Does not Vishṇu-Purâṇa (VI, 5-84) corroborate this?—"He is the Essence possessing all blissful perfections"? Does not Karṇa, in the Bhîshma Parva of the Mahâbhârata, say:—"Were all the worlds assembled together, and were they all to praise the perfections of the great victorious Vishṇu (born as Krishṇa, Vasudeva's son, bearing the discus, conch and sword) for a million million years, would it even then reach the end of exhaustion?" Did not Lady Târâ (among other things) tell Vâli her husband [Râmâyaṇa IV. 15. 21.]

"In Him the noblest glories meet"?

Did not the royal guests, assembled at Daṣaratha's court, proclaim thus?:—

"Each noblest gift of form and mind,
O Monarch, in thy Son we find.
Do thou the god-like virtues hear,
Which Râma to our hearts endear.
So richly blest with graces, none
In all the earth excels thy Son."

[Râmâyaṇa II, Canto, ii.]

And does not Yâmuna-Muni[1] (or Âḷavandâr, the Guru of Râmânuja) sum up in his verse *svâbhâvikâ*,[2] &c., as follows:—

"He is one possessing an infinitude of super-excellent auspicious perfections conformable to His Divine character"?

[*Vide* Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 102. "Uyarvu," I, 1. 1.]

1 Who flourished in 916 A. C. [*Vide* Heirarchic Table.]

2 The 11th verse in his Stotra-Ratna. [Engl. Tran. by Pârthasârathi Yogi.]

TOPIC 4.

God's Grace dispels Ignorance.

Nambiḷḷai[1] explained the terms (*a*) *Jñânânudaya,*[2] (*b*) *Anyathâ-jñâna*[2] and (*c*) *Viparîta-jñâna*[2] thus:—

(*a*) Non-Apprehension=the error of taking the body for the soul.

(*b*) Wrong-Apprehension=the error of owing allegiance to other gods but the one God.

(*c*) Reserved-Apprehension=the error of thinking that the soul is independent, (whereas it is dependent on God); and is self-enjoyable, (whereas its enjoyment belongs by right to God). [This is the Kevalî or Jijñâsu[3] class.]

Saint Parâṅkuṣa exclaimed: "That I have been illuminated thus,—*viz.*, (*a*), (*b*) & (*c*) annihilated without trace—is evidence of God's Free Grace—a gift of his Sovereign Charity."

(Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 106. "Uyarvu," I, 1. 1.)

TOPIC 5.

Loving Service to God is the 'all' of Saints.

Saint Nammâzhvâr's expression: "wisdom-love" (=*madinalam*) has been expanded thus:—

1st Interpretation.—God gave me 'wisdom' as also 'love.'

2nd Interpretation by Parâṣara-Bhattârya[4]—"God gave me 'loving wisdom' or wisdom partaking of the nature of love (to God), vigorous from the very root like the tree Karuṅgâli.[5] In ordinary cases, love of God is a growth from

1 Flourished in 1127 A. C. [*Vide* Hierarchic Table.]

2 For explanation of these terms *vide* Pârthasârathi Yogi's Tatva-*traya, pp. 28, 38, & 41* (Note 15.)

3 *Vide* p. 343 Bh. Gitâ by Author.

4 The son of Âzhvân, flourished 1074 A. C. [*Vide* Hierarchic Table.]

5 *Acasia Catechu* or *Sundra.* A heavy hard wood.

acts of virtue, but in the case of Nammâzhvâr, God's spontaneous Grace occupied the place of such acts and love, by one's self-effort; and love to God in our Saint's case is no other than the heart and mind perfectly disposed and attuned to the loving service of God.

3rd Interpretation:—They asked Embâr[1] whether St. Nammâzhvâr was one characterised by love to God (*Bhakti*,) or characterised by surrender to the will of God (*Prapatti*). He replied that the Saint was the latter, or one whose will was conformable with God's, or who had surrendered his will entirely to Him; and that love to God in his case was simply a habit of his by which he sustained his being.[2] Ordinarily we can also be resigned to God's will, but employed too in obtaining food for six months or a year; whereas food, drink and every other luxury was to this saint, God Kṛishṇa Himself."[3]

[Bhag: Vish., p. 107, Bk. I, "Uyarvu" I.1.1.]

TOPIC 6.

God the Cause of Motion as well as Rest.

They asked Embâr[1]:—If all our actions or motions are dependent on God and therefore proceed from God, is God required again to bring our activity to rest?

Embâr[1] replied:—"Yes, God in all cases. Do you know not that Viṣvâmitra was required to arrest the fall (or motion,)

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1 Flourished in 1026 A. C., contemporary, disciple and relative of Râmânuja [*Vide* Hierarchic Table.]

2 Read Ch: V. Theol: Germ:

3 Cp: "I seemed indeed to eat, and to drink with you but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men. [Tobias: XII. 19.] Read St. John VI. 48-58.

2

of Triṣanku[1] from paradise (Svarga)? In the same manner, only God can give us rest or peace; (only *He* can so will; in other words, we are entirely in His hands for our salvation and all the processes previous to this by which He brings about such a consummation)."[2]

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 149. "Ninṛanar" I. 1.6.]

TOPIC 7.

The Chief Characteristic of Godly Men.

Nañjîyar[3] often expressed :—"Any one can test himself whether he be a real Vaishṇava[4] or no. If, when seeing others' adverses or adversity his pity be excited, and he do ejaculate "oh", he may know himself as a true Vaishṇava[4]; but if his breast be steeled against others' tribulation and further vitiated by emotions of vile pleasure surging up at its sight, he may know himself as not belonging to such a holy band. To be a Vaishṇava[4] is to belong to God, and *vice versa*. To belong to God is to be like God Himself, *i.e.*, conform to the

1 Triṣanku is a king of the solar line seventh in descent from Ikshvâku. He applied to his family Chaplain Vaṣishṭha to help him perform a rite to win him a way to heaven alive, but Vaṣishṭha as well as his hundred sons, to whom also in return the king applied, pronounced such a request as beyond his scope and a transgression of the law of the world. Triṣanku replying that he would bid adieu to them and seek others' aid, was cursed to turn into a vile Chaṇḍâla caste. He now sought Viṣvâmitra, who, by the power of his penance, bid Triṣanku ascend heaven. But Indra, its Lord cried :—

'With thy best speed Triṣanku, flee.
There is no home prepared for thee'.
By thy great master's curse brought low
Go, falling headlong, earthward go."
And screaming in his swift descent
'O, save me Hermit!' down he went,
And Viṣvâmitra heard his cry,
And marked him falling from the sky,
And giving all his passion sway
Cried out in fury, 'Stay, O Stay.'

[Râmâyaṇa I., 57 to 60.]

2 Read 'Upakâra-Saṅgraha,' by Vedântâchârya.

3 *Vide* Hierarchic Table.

4 Vishṇu connotes God in his all-pervasive character, or omnipresence. And so a Vaishṇava is one who always realises such Presence, or walks in such Presence. When He so realises, he can be but friendly to all. Vaishṇava briefly means Godly. [Read Ch. 1, 6th Treatise, p. 333, Vol. I., Rodriguez, Christian and Religious Perfection].

ideals which He has preached and practised; one of these ideals being to be "The Friend of all Creatures." [1]

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I., pp. 188-189. "Vîdumin".]

TOPIC 8.

The Beauty of God.

Bhattârya, as he went one day, found a certain man returning from the (Kâveri) river in the company of a sweet-eyed damsel; and as he walked along, he screened her lovable eyes in eager solicitude, against any accident (such as dust, glare, &c.) happening to them. Bhattârya accosted him and asked:—

'Friend! What maketh thee to be so attentive to her?'

'Oh! the eyes are so lovely, so delicate and charming—!'

'Bhattârya: 'Is it for these eyes thy heart is so vanquished? Supposing I should show you more beautiful eyes?'

So saying, he took the man into the Temple at Ṣrîrangam[2] and directed his attention to the Divine eyes of Ranganâtha[2] there. Forthwith the man became so enamoured of the Divine that he resigned his carnal love for spiritual love.

(This anecdote is typical of the sacrifice of worldly appetites to the surpassing love and beauty of God, or supreme preference to God as against the adulterations of sense and disposal of the heart to earthly things.)

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 189. "Vîdumin" I. 2.1.]

TOPIC 9.

Winning Men to Wisdom by short ways and means; or heart turned to God by a Clever piece of Policy.

Saint Nammâzhvâr exhorted men to surrender themselves to "Him who is the Granter of Heaven" (=வீடுடையான்) in

1 *Vide* Bhag.-Gî. V., 29, by the Author.

2 For the esoteric significance of these terms, read article: 'Ṣesha-sayanam by a Recluse'. [P. 56. Awakened India, Vol. I.]

Dramiḍopanishad: I., 2-1, "Vîdumin." If it be questioned why our Saint did not directly say 'Nârâyaṇa' at once, it is answered that the reason to so refrain from revealing the Holy Name at once, but to adopt this circumlocutory (or periphrastic) style, is to set the mind on to inquire Who the 'Granter of Heaven' is and so on gradually lead it to the knowledge of the Highest Mystery. That otherwise the mind that is filled with worldly concerns is naturally averse to such spiritual investigations is illustrated by the story of Janamejaya and Vaiṣampâyana.

Ṛishi Vaiṣampâyana proposed to King Janamejaya (the son of Parîkshit) that he may hear the whole of the Mahâbhârata story from one end to the other.

King: "Sire, I have no leisure."

Ṛishi: "Canst thou not listen to one Chapter thereof?"

King: "Can't spare time for that even, Sire!"

Ṛishi: "What, hast thou no time to hear one Verse at least?"

King: "In that case, Sire, go on; I am willing."

The Ṛishi began:—

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ मूढौ दुर्योधनदशाननौ ।
गोग्रहं वनभङ्गञ्च दृष्ट्वायुद्धं पुनःपुनः ॥

"Duryodhana and Râvaṇa,
Blockheads are these two men,
'Capture of kine'[1] and 'Ruin of grove'[2]
Seeing, to war again."

On hearing this, Janamejaya began to ask: "Holy Sire! what is "Capture of kine"?,[1] what is "Ruin of grove"?[2] and so on, till to fully satisfy himself as to what the bearings of

1 This has reference to the Capture of Virâta's kine by Duryodhana narrated in Mahâ-bhâ.

2 This is with reference to the ravages committed by Hanumân in the Aṣoka Vana of Râvaṇa [Râmâyaṇa. V.]

these passages were, he had to hear from Vaiṣampâyana, the whole of the Mahâbhârata and Râmâyaṇa.[1]

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 192. " Vîdumin " I, 1-2.]

TOPIC 10.

The forgetting God and re-collecting Him.

Nañjîyar[2] said :—

" A merchant left his home for earning money, when his wife was pregnant. Much time passed before he returned. She gave birth to a son. He grew and traded and also left home for trading. It happened by accident, that both of them (but unknown to each other as father and son), simultaneously purchased goods and stored them under one shed. The shed was narrow to hold them all. A quarrel arose, and grew and grew so much so in warmth that the one wished to take the head of the other. A third person who knew both chanced to alight on the spot, and said :—' This is your father ;' 'this is your son.' Immediately they ceased hostilities, and remorsefully repenting for what had happened joined their goods into one stock, having now but one interest; and the recognized relation of father and son restoring to the father the function of the protector, and to the son that of the protected."

Thus have we forgotten our kinship to God. As soon as that is recognized, we become His own, all our interests blend in His; the abyss is bridged that separates Him from us, by virtue of His Majesty and Sovereignty over the material and the spiritual Universes and by reason of our littleness and poverty of resources. The very thought of His Supreme

[1] Cp: how Maṇakkâl-Nambi by reciting one verse from Gîta: [राज विद्या, &c., IX-2] to Âḷavandâr he made him to read the whole and converted him. And also cp: how by the recital of one verse, by Mahâpûrṇa, *viz*, 'svâbhâvika, &c.' Râmânujà's further inquiries were excited.

[2] Flourished 1054 A. C. [*Vide* Hierarchic Table.]

Immense Majesty doth cause a fear that our insignificance is of no account in His calculation, just as a bit of straw, drifting on the bosom of the vast ocean, is borne back to the shore, crested on a curling surf. But not so; as soon as we realise that He is our Rightful Ruler and Constituted Sovereign, having all as —and therefore ourselves included in—His possessions, we are also thus rightfully entitled and constitutedly fit to approach Him in love, without fear[1] of such vast distance existing between Him and us, as between the ocean and the straw[2].

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, pp: 213-214. "Aḍaṅgu" I. 2-7.]

TOPIC 11.

Fear of God how converted to Love of God.

Naññîyar:—"A certain prince saw a garden but feared to enter it. But as soon as some one said:—'This garden belongs to thy father, the king,' all fear vanished; he entered, roamed and enjoyed there at pleasure. So doth our fear to approach the Almighty vanish as soon as we realise that we are His Children (or natural objects of His boundless love)".[3]

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, p. 214. "Aḍaṅgu" I. 2.7]

1 Cp. 'The *fear* of God is wisdom's root;

The *love* of God its ripest fruit.'

Cp. Bhâgavata, vii. 9-26. 'Kv-âham, &c.'

2 Cp. To know, to love and to serve God is what Vedânta teaches, according to Râmânujâ. To love God is the first commandment of the Bible [*vide* Matt. xxii., 37, 38]. St. Francis-de Sales says:—

"Ah! Theotime, it appears, if I may dare to say so that the heart of God is passionately enamoured of ours. Would it not have been a sufficient favour to *permit* us to love Him? No; such a permission was not sufficiently descriptive of the tenderness and ardour of his Divine heart; an express *commandment* to love Him with all our strength was necessary; that neither the greatness of God nor the misery of man which usually remove us at such a distance from the Divinity, or any other pretext whatsoever should deter us from fulfilling a duty which he wished to render so imperative' (*viz.*, to *love* Him above all) [pp. 66-67. A Treatise on the Love of God.]

3 Read: 'Sâṅkhya, Parables', pp: 399-400, Max Muller's Six Systems of Indian Philosophy.

Cp. P. 154, Vol. IV., Siddhânta Dîpikâ, Sivajnâna Siddhiyâr, by J. M. N.

TOPIC 12.

Nearing the Grave is a gain to Saints.

On a certain birth-day of Ṣrî Râmânuja, the ascetic Kunṛattu Jîyar reverently approached His Holiness. Râmânuja calling him by his dear name of Ṣingap-pirân, said:—' Ṣingap-pirân! dost thou know that this is my birthday?" Not understanding what Râmânuja imported by this, Pirân remained silent. Râmânuja broke the silence thus: ' As soon as we drop the body, salvation certain waits at our door; only the days that intervene stand as the obstacle. And therefore, is not crossing over one year of this obstacle jubilantly significant? Dost thou not think ' that this is something *gained*?'[1]

[Bhag: Vish., Bk. I, pp. 226-227. "Oḍuṅga," I, 2-9.]

TOPIC 13.

No cause for anxiety when true kinship with God is once recognised.

Embâr once explained St. Nammâzhvâr's passage: "Thou hast but to number thy remaining days" (I. 2.9. Tiru-

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1 Cp. (*a*) "The human personality is not lost with the body, death is indeed an expansion of it, death is an epoch in which we become spirits of ampler range." [p. 703, Contemp. Review, for May 1900.]

(*b*) ' God possessed, our own God, that is creation's Home, that our last End, there only is our rest. O that the winds of grace would blow that we might sail more swiftly over this broad sea to our eternal Home! Another day is gone, another week is passed, another year is told. Blessed be God then, we are nearer to the end. It comes swifty; yet it comes slowly too. Come it must, and then it will all be but a dream to look back upon'. (Dr. F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature, p. 394, Ch. iv, Bk. iii.]

(*c*) ' As for your soul, it is above the law of death' [P. 160 Revd. S. Rutherford's Select Letters.]

(*d*) ' If death, which is before you and us all, were any other thing but a friendly dissolution and a change, not a destruction of life, it would seem a hard voyage to go through such a sad and dark trance, so thorny a valley, as is the wages of sin; but I am confident the way ye know, though your foot never trod in that black shadow, the loss of life is gain to you.' [PP. 237-8, Ibid.]

(*e*) ' We die in the best state of dying, &c. [P. 344, Creator and the Creature, by Faber.]

(*f*) ' O, cruel time, that torments us and suspends our dearest enjoyments that we wait for, when we shall be bathed and steeped soul and body, down in the depths of this love of loves! O time, I say, run fast! O motions, mend your pace!'[P. 215, Revd. S. Rutherford's Select Letters.]

(*g*) Read W. Whitman's Death Carol.

vâi-mozhi) thus :—' When the cause has ceased, has not the effect ceased? May not fruit be considered as having come to our hands? Is there any more cause for anxiety?' (The cause here is sin or ignorance which has bound us to an inconstant detestable body; so that when sin has ceased, no more of embodied existence is in store. Sin has ceased as soon as we have realised our true relationship with God, *viz.*, He as the Proprietor and we as His property.

[Bhag. Vish., Bk. I, p. 227. "Oḍuṅga," I. 2.9.]

TOPIC 14.

The Holy Eight-Syllabled Mantra,[1] a precious Truth for the deserving.

St. Nammâzhvar ;—

"Seek ye, of Nârâyaṇ, His Feet,
Of Graces 'yond compare, the Seat;
The Sum of countless souls,—unique;
To Him, in likeness, beatific."

[*Tiruvâi-mozhi* I. 2.10 "Eṇ-perukku".]

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1 This Mystery called the Ashṭâkshari is contained in the Nârâyaṇopanishad or Ashtâkshari-Upanishad. The nine divisions into which it can be etymologically split convey the nine kinds of relation subsisting between God and soul:—God the (1) Sire (*A*) ; as the (2) Saviour (*A*) ; (3) that all souls exist for Him (*A*) ; (4) Spouse (*U*) ; (5) the conscious soul (*M*), (6) God, *owner*, the soul His *chattel* (*na mah*) (7) Soul is his body (*nara*) ; (8) God is Seat or Prop ; and (9) God the Enjoyer (of souls and all)(*ayana*)

[*Vide* p. 2 on Hinduism or the Vaidik Religion, *by S. Pârthasârathi Yogi.*]

This is the Mantra, to learn which, Râmânuja volunteered eighteen times at the door of His Guru Tirukkôṭṭiyûr-Nambi who revealed it to him under promise of secrecy; but let what Râmânuja did then be told in the reverent words of Annie Besant :—" It is told of Sri Râmânujâchârya that a Mantra was once given him by his Guru, and he asked what would happen if he told it to another. "Thou wilt die," was the answer. "And what will happen to the one who hears it?" "He will be liberated." Then out ran the devotee of Śri Kṛishṇa, and flying to the top of a tower, he shouted out the Mantra to the crowded streets below, careless what happened to himself, so that others should be set free from sin and sorrow. There is the typical devotee, there the Lover transformed into the likeness of the Beloved." ["The Value of Devotion". Theos. Review, May 1900, p. 272.]. [*Vide* Note 91, p. 140, Yogi Pârthasârathi's Engl. Tatva-trayâ.]

Âzhvân, who was teaching his sons Bhattar and Ṣrîrâma-ppiḷḷâi, stopped short as soon as he came to this Stanza, and ordered them to go and learn its Holy Sense from their Pastor Embâr; but as they were leaving, he called them back:—

"Sons, stay! we do not know who may live and who may die the next moment. Life is so uncertain. Remain therefore and hear the secret of this verse from myself." He instructed them the Holy Eight-Syllabled Mantra, and told them to consider the above Stanza as explanatory of this Holy Prayer [The first order "to go" implies the gravity of sense contained in the Prayer and worthy of being imparted by the constituted Guru; the countermand "to stay" implies that not a moment should be lost in learning the Science that will lead us to God.]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I. P. 228. "Eṇ-perukku"].

TOPIC 15.

God is near and easy. Only we have to understand Him.

Râmânuja to Embâr:—

St. Nammâzhvâr has so far taught us that Great is God and therefore He is Worthy of Worship. But we may ask the saint:—"How is that possible, as if a lame individual were asked to mount an elephant?" To this, the saint would reply thus:—"Not so; if the elephant itself laid down, so as to allow the lame man to ride it, then God though great is accessible." Think of the Avatâras (or Incarnations where God sacrifices Himself for man). Those who fail to recognize in it the Almighty, go the wrong way, but other fortunate men go into transports of joy at seeing the Almighty thus descending to man. Thou, Embâr! belongest to the latter holy band. Charitable men dig tanks for example; one man drowns himself to death therein, whereas another allays his thirst therefrom. Avatâra is like the tank. A lamp is lighted. The winged ants *(viṭṭil)* rush into

it and die; at the same time, we do make use of the same light for various useful purposes. Avatâra is like the lamp. ('God is not *away* from us, He is *with* us always'' is the import of this analogy.)[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I. Pp: 259—260. "Pattuḍai"].

TOPIC 16.

God's impatience to save souls.

Tiruk-kurugai-ppirân Piḷḷân (the writer of the 6000 Commentary on St. Nammâzhvâr's Tiruvâi-Mozhi), used to say thus on the event of Lord Kṛishṇa stealing butter:—

1 (*a*) "What we say in secret is known to Him who made our interior nature. He who made us is present with us though we are alone."

[The 'Papyrus Prisse' 2000 B. C.]

(*b*) The modern scientific religious spirit wants such a God, for says Rev. E. J. Fripp, B. A., of Dr. Martineau's System of Philosophy.—"But, rightly interpreted, a philosophy that teaches the divine in all souls, that reveals the authority for good in every heart and conscience and proclaims on a new and deep sense, the Father-hood of God to all men and women is the recognition of universal rights and sacred obligations, compared with which the rights and obligations of possession, blood, race, rank and education are altogether secondary. The religious future is with those who feel and utter this, and make great sacrifices for it.

But in order to do this, something farther is required. *We want a new conception of God the Father Himself.* We have discovered that we are children of the Highest; but what is He? Not a benevolent Being who has put us here on probation and calls on us from the height of His superiority to overcome evil which baffles our thought, but a Being who is Himself at the heart of all this groaning world, *of* it and *in* it and *agonizing for it*, a supreme and infinite Hero (like the Avatârs) who summons us to work and triumph with Him, and dying, as it were, with Him, to rise again perpetually to higher life. A God who does not Himself suffer, is not the God of this creation, nor can He command the enthusiastic devotion of men. To make self-sacrifices we must worship Infinite Self-sacrifice." ["Theism and Pantheism" by Dr. A. Wells, P. 224, Theos: Review for May 1900.]

(*c*) 'Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou didst already possess Me. Therefore do not be uneasy when I seem still far off. [P: 59. Pascal's Thoughts].

Cp: Bhâg: X. 32-30: "*N-àham tu sakhyo &c.*"

"He would not wait till the churning was over, but would impatiently thrust Himself between and lay His (tiny) fingers on the half-made (creamy) butter, like hungry men not waiting till food was fully cooked, but eating it up half-cooked and half-uncooked."[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Vol. I. P. 274. "Pattuḍai."]

TOPIC 17.

The virtue of mediation.

Nañjîyar submitted this question to Bhattârya:—

"For salvation, is it not enough to resort directly to the Universal Lord; why should it be necessary to go to Him by mediation of the Mother?" To which Bhattârya replied:—In nature we know the protection the mother affords to a child when it is found guilty and the father is thereby angry. The mother knows exactly the opportunity when the father is in the proper mood to be appeased and made to forgive the child, and renew his natural love for him. Even so is the case with God in protecting His creatures. As Father, He is the Judge; as Mother

[1] The esoteric meaning of this butter-stealing event (on which the Christian missionaries delight to put such vicious construction) is that God incarnates among men, and is so solicitous of saving them that he takes their butter, even unawares. Butter is put into pots and hung up on hanging hoofs of rope (ṣikyam. Sâns). This network symbolizes the body; butter in it the soul; the act of stealing, the solicitude on the part of God to save the soul, or reclaim it, His own property. That (1) God desires to be offered the food of His aspirants; that (2) He is ever active in the function of salvation, are the two truths exemplified by the stealing act of the Holy Incarnation. [Read our Bhagavad Gîtâ with commentaries. IX-26; *Patram &c.*"] In Bhâg. Pur. X, Butter (being the essence) is explained as Brahma-Vidyâ or Theosophy. *Verb: sap.* Cp: "God desiring and man withholding, and then God getting, as it were, *by stealth or by caress*, less than a tithe of His due from less than a tithe of His creation, and then as it were spreading Himself out in a kind of joyous triumph at his success."

[Dr. F. W. Faber, Ch. I. Bk. ii. Creator and Creature.]

Read: P: 23: "*The Holy Lives of the Âzhvârs.*"

He is the Forgiver." [This is the Principle of vicarious redemption, and the Quality of mercy existing in God to overflowing.] [1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I. P. 310 "nâlu."]

1 Much may be written on the two-fold aspect of God here figuratively exemplified; the two-fold aspect of Fatherhood and Motherhood. This is the meaning of the holy formula: "Srîman-Nârâyaṇa." Read P. 6, Bhagavad Gi. (by Author), footnote 1. The Subâlopanishad 6 begins with: "Mother (*mâta*)." In Bh. Gi. IX. 17, Krishṇa calls Himself "Mother." Among many expositions of this Universal Truth, the following is found on p. 1229, Vol. II, Chicago Parliament of Religions, by B. B. Nagarkar:—"The first ideal of the Brahma Samàj is the ideal of the motherhood of God. * * * * the world has yet to understand and realise as it never has in the past, the tender and loving relationship that exists between mankind and their Supreme Universal Divine Mother. O! What a world of thought and feeling is centred in that one monosyllabic word 'Ma' (mother). * * * Words cannot describe, hearts cannot conceive of the tender and self-sacrificing love of a human mother. Of all human relations that of mother to her children is the most sacred and elevating relation and yet our frail and fickle human mother is nothing in comparison with the Divine Mother of the entire humanity, who is the primal source of all love, all mercy and all purity."

Mother represents the principle of mediation or the Christ. In this principle, are all the agents of God appointed by him for salvation, agents interceding between man and God. Says Fr. de Sales in His "Love of God" Preface, P. XXVIII:—"It is a vain delusion to imagine we have the Lord for our Father, unless we recognise the church as our mother." Read Vish. Pur. for a vivid description of the Father and Mother principles blended in nature. Read pp. 1376 Chicago: Parl. of Rel. Vol. II. Râmânuja-Religion by S. Pârthasârathi Yogi:—The Universal Mother, Lakshmi, the Sakti or Personal Energy of Vishṇu (the latter identified with Supreme Deity) is Lady and Goddess of the worlds, and the mediatrix between God and the Soul. She checks sin and stirs up Divine Mercy and Love for sinners. In her incarnation as Sitâ, the bride of Râma, she is especially to be venerated as our Lady of Grace and Mercy. She is the Beloved of the Lord incarnate in Râma. She converts the soul by her mercy and the Lord by her beauty." St. Fr. de Sales says:—"Strength (Father) is tempered by sweetness (Mother) and sweetness is supported by strength. One stimulates, the other persuades." [P. 78, ch. XII. Bk. ii.] *Vide* Sri-Sûkta with commentaries, by Max Muller, end of Vol. IV. Mandala X. Rig Veda, pp. 513ff; and also Lakshmi-tantra of *Pâñcharâtra*. The idea of motherhood is found in the Pârsi scrip-

TOPIC 18.

God as Love contrasted with God as Supreme etc.

As long as St. Nammâzhvâr confined himself to discourse on Divinity in its aspect of the Exalted, the Worship-worthy, and the Approachable, to the exclusion of abhorrent earthly objects, which ordinarily absorb the attention of non-Godward man, a disciple approvingly listened to it, his approbation taking the form :—"The theme is one worthy of the acceptance of the world-weary, so long as it treats of the Almighty in His Sublime character; therefore I listen to it as a sensible man ought to." But as soon as the Saint changed the Divine discourse into the form of *love* to God, and that love treated by analogies taken from the experiences of mankind in the world, and that love treated specially in its relation as Lover and the Beloved, or as Mistress and Spouse, as between soul and God, the disciple turned away from it thinking that this kind of treatment was a shock to good taste, outrage to his wisdom, and a violence to his commonsense. He forthwith left the place murmuring that the discourse had assumed the character of a sensualist's love-conversation. The holy author of the exposition of this *divine* love, *viz.*, Nañjîyar exclaimed :—"What an unfortunate man this, that he should have failed to realise in his heart the deep

tures as shown by Annie Besant in her "Zoroastrianism" (1897) (*a*) P. 70-71]:—The wisdom, the primeval Wisdom, or Mind by which the world was made. This is Armaiti (sounding almost like Ramâ= a name of Lakshmi), of whom it is written: to succour this life (to increase it) Armaiti came with wealth, the good and true mind; she, the everlasting one, created the material world." [Essays on the Parsis by Dr. Haug.] In later days Armaiti became identified with her creation, and was worshipped as the goddess of the Earth, but of yore she completed the Trinity. (*b*) "These four favours first asked I thou, Ahura! Asha! and grant too thine, Armaiti!" [Dr. Mill's Gâthâs P. 343.]

Also read 'Simon Magus, P. 67, by Mead; Keshub Chunder's Autobiography on Motherhood, and his dissertation on the Name: Śrînâtha; Pârthasârathi Yogi's Tatvatraya: P. 193. Śri to us always resides in His bosom, like Christ the Son in His bosom. [John I. 18.]

hidden sense of our altered discourse![1]; that he should have failed to see in it the explanation of the mysterious *Divine* Love (Bhakti) contained in the commandment of the Bṛihadâraṇya-kopanishad, [Maitreyî-Brâhmaṇa, 44]:—"He is to be lovingly, ntensely meditated on (=Nidhidhyâsitavyah.)"[2]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. I; P. 326 "Añjirai."]

[1] Cp. "Why then did they not believe? Because their will was too vitiated to relish the suavity of faith, and therefore they remained incredulous. Their understanding felt the force of the arguments for believing, but their hearts were insensible to the motives from which that belief should spring; and it was on this account they refused to yield." [Treatise on Love of God by St. Fr. de Sales, p. 83, Ch. XIV., Bk. II.]

[2] Cp. Rig Vida: "*Yoshâ Jâramiva priyam* IX. 32-5"=" God is to be loved even as the maiden her secret lover." (2) Bh: Gi: IX-29: "Who-so worship Me in love, they are in Me and I in them" (meaning that the union brought by love is so firm.) (3) Bh: Gi. X-9: "Mylovers' thoughts are rivetted on Me, their life is nestled in Me; their conversation is about Myself, full of mutual enlightenment and entertainment. By this they derive contentment and rapture"(freely paraphrased).(3)Ch: Up: vii-25:—"God (*àtma*), the Subject of (thy) instruction, is below, is above, is before, is behind, is up; He is all. Whoso seeth thus, thinketh thus, willeth thus, loveth Him,recreateth in Him, *uniteth* (Mithuna) in Him, and is possessor of Divine Blessedness." [" Athâta Âtmâdeṣa &c."]. *Vide* Bhâgavata:—"X-13-2" Striyâ viṭânâmiva etc.= "like lovers with their mistresses."

Pectus facit theologum; runs the Latin saying. True religion is more of the heart than of the head. To him whose heart has not expanded to divine love, the intellectual alone gives satisfaction (as in the typical case of the disciple running away from the Divine-love discourse). St. Augustine said:—"*Quid est credere in Deum? credendo amare, credendo diligere, credendo in eum ire, et ejus membris incorporari*." meaning: what is to believe in God? Believing is loving (with passionate warmth=the love of *emotion*= Bhakti-rûp-âpanna-jñâna): Believing is loving (witn reasoned attachment=the love of *esteem*): Believing is to pass into Him, to be incorporated with His members." The God-love-literature of the Âzhvârs or Indian Saints is superb and voluminous. Their emotional outbursts find but a feeble echo in the exclamations of the Western Saints. A few specimens of the latter, and of the relation in which God is spoken of as Spouse, will here suffice:—Christ said (*vide* Matt: xxii-37; Mark: xii-30; Luke x-27):—" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy might." Rabbi Akiba (P: 266, Talmud) says on this:—

"With all thy heart"=With thy propensities towards good and towards evil.

"With all thy soul"=Even though he should demand thy life.

"With all thy might"=All thy personal possessions:

[Such a love is characterized as "*Eka-bhakti*" *vide* Bh: Gi: vii-17].

Page 11: Excerpts from the "Letters of a Mystic of the Present Day.":—

Love, who by Thyself art binding
Every thought and wish of mine;
Love, which round my heart are winding
Hidden cords of strength Divine;
Love, I yield myself to Thee
Thine for ever more to be."—
Novalis.

Page. 50-51: I. We know Him as our Father; that is our Regeneration. [Cp. *Pitâ*: Sub: Up.]

II. We know Him as our Spouse or Counterpart; that is the marriage of Re-generation [Read the *Rahasya* called *Âtma-vivâha*.]

III. We know Him as the Universal Life (Vishṇu) in its manifold operations and fruits through us; then we see and know Him in the Offspring of His love.

Page. 83:—'He is the One Husband to whom St. Paul, a true friend of the Bridegroom said he had espoused the Corinthians (2-Cor. xi-2). It is because we all have one Husband the Lord-Spirit, that there is unity in the multiplicity of the one Body. If we endeavour to form alliances with other spirits than the One Lord-Spirit, we shall only continue in incompleteness and disunion. In that One Lord-Spirit we shall all find our complement, and He will renew us each in the spirit of our minds and make us each perfect in sympathy of perception, affection and action, with the Head and Members of the Whole Body.'

Page 208-209: Can it really be called knowledge, I mean in the full sense of the word, if it be less than an intelligent and sympathetic fellowship with the Universal Spirit? Is it not an indefinite apprehension of something which is far off, rather than an intimate fellowship with Some One ever nigh? "The Lord" to me means the Universal, tender, sympathizing all-perfecting Mind. The one word which expresses what I understand it to mean is *Husband*, in its ideal sense of Guide, Sympathizer and Supporter; on whom every human heart in its weakness, narrowness and ignorance may lean, in sure and certain confidence of being made entirely One with the Wisdom, Love, and Power of the Most High in Whom "we live and move and have our Being."

From the Perfect Way or the Finding of Christ:—

Page 40: * * "God is Love". And Love is that which not merely creates and after brief caress repudiates and discards; but which sustains, redeems, perfects and perpetuates."

Page 325: "O Soul of my Soul! would God I were one with Thee, even though it were in death!"

"Thou hast all of my love, my desire, and my sorrow:
Yea, my life is mingled with Thine, and is gone forth with Thee!

TOPIC 19.

God's Grace alone can crown personal effort.

Two devout men at Tiruk-kôttiyûr met at a bathing ghât. One of them Terk-âzhvân said thus to Kôḷari-Yâzhvân:— "Think not, friend! that my sins will be washed by dipping in these waters once and twice. Unless the grace of God in the

Behold! Love is a ransom, and
the tears thereof are prayers.

Here is Love's secret, and the mystery of the communion of saints.

Love redeemeth, Love lifteth up, Love enlighteneth, Love advanceth Souls.

(*Thomas á Kempis—Imitation of Christ: by John Payne, London, Nisbet & Co.: p*: 217):—

Ch: XV. Bk III *Divine Illumination*:—"Dearest Jesus, most beloved *Spouse* of my soul, supreme source of light and love, and sovereign Lord of universal nature! * * * * when shall I lose, in the Love of Thee, all perception of myself, and have no sense of any being but Thine."

Ch: I. Bk. II. p: 126 (*Id.*): "Oh, faithful soul! dispose thy heart for the reception of this Bridegroom."

St: Francis de Sales has written "A Treatise on the Love of God". Among many things, he says (Ch: IX. Book I p: 20-21):—"This great king (Solomon), in order to facilitate the contemplation of that spiritual love which is maintained by a faithful correspondence between our hearts and the inspirations of grace, represent the Divine Lover and his chosen Spouse under the figure of a faithful shepherd and chaste shepherdess, whose mutual affection he describes.

The shepherdess first appears on the scene: Solomon, in a transport of love, puts these words into her mouth: *Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.* Read the whole of Solomon's Song or the Canticle of Canticles" and Jayadêva's Gita-Govinda, translated by Edwin Arnold.

'The virgins would flock fast about the Bridegroom; they would embrace and take hold of Him and not let Him go.' [P. 124; Rev: S, Rutherford's Select Letters.]

If the Christian Missionaries should still persist in misrepresenting Lord Kṛishṇa, the God of Love, here is one country-man of their own nation, Mr. E. E. Sturdy, saying thus in p: 31 of his Nârada-Bhakti-Sûtra:—

"The playing of Krishṇa with the shepherdesses as described in the Vishṇu-Purâṇa and elsewhere, perhaps no Hindu allegory has been so aspersed; it has been made by some few debased people of India, as similar allogories have in other countries an excuse for license under the cloak of religion. It has been used by the ignorant, by missionaries and others, as a weapon of hostile criticism against Hindu religions. We may safely assert that none of these have read the

shape of the discus in His hand descend and destroy it, no personal exertion (without grace) is of the least efficacy."

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I, P. 344. I. 4-2 "En-ṣeyyâ."]

TOPIC 20.

What doth absence of God signify

St. Nammâzhvâr thus sang (1-4-4: Ti-vây-Mozhi):—

"Ye Chakravâkâ[1] birds! of sapphire hue,
Tell Him the tidings of my flame, will you?
How He, aware that I must cease to live
Can still depart from me? Doth He believe
When He hath proved to me the joys of love
In union with His cloud-like[2] body 'bove,—

---

original but merely sought some means to destroy people's religion in order to advocate their own. Time might be better employed in pointing out the original intention of the allegory (*Vide* "Avatârs by Annie Besant") by which they would elevate both themselves and the people with whom they come in contact * * * Love is one, whether it be called that of Christ, Kṛishṇa or any other individualized expression of Truth.

Madame Guyon's Lines:—

"Love is our only business here,
Love simple, constant and sincere,"

* * * * *

(The Lives of Lord Gauranga and of Paramahamsa Râmakṛishṇa Deva may be read.)

"My spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive
And canst easily double its fires!'

* * * * *

"Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the bridegroom and the bride"

* * * * *

"Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit thee for a meaner love."

Also read p: 126: "The Psychology of the Saints.":—"Now it can join with St. Francis of Assisi &c."

1. Called "Makhanril" in Tamil. A sort of colored goose, also called the Brâhmany duck, the *Anas Casarca*.

2 "The soft azure which the church has selected as the emblem of celestial purity, that of the canopy above" [P: 15. "The Voice of Creation" by F. C. Oakeley, M.A.]

A lapidary, when his sight becomes fatigued, turns his eyes on a bright emerald, and which by its grateful hue, is soon enabled to resume his labours." [St. Fr:de Sales] Lord Krishṇa is represented in colors of the azure and of emerald."

And proved indeed to Himself too, the fact:—
'That parting 's pain to me'; to Him 'tis not?"[1]

A Tamil scholar here put this question to Bhattârya:—When we know that God is away from the Saint by the fact that he is sending the bird-messenger to carry tidings of his pining passion, God has first to *hear* the Saint's plight; whereas from the song above, we gather that He has already *witnessed* His plight. My doubt is how, when they had already been locked in joy of union, could God—one of the pair—have *witnessed* the signs of pain after the separation? To this Bhattârya:—Eh! Tamil scholar, how can thy scholarship question St. Nammâzhvâr's song, when thou oughtest to know what the Tamil Savant Valluvar hath spoken:—" In fast embrace with my Lover I lay, with now and then a slack; when fast, my color came; when lax, where was it's (color's) name?"[2]

Also! " wherever, wherever my Lover touched, there, there, a flush of color rose; wherever, wherever the touch had left, there, there the color sank."[3] So, then, God knew—when He was in union with our Saint—that the Saint's nature was so tender as not to permit of the slightest separation to happen without producing disastrous results, even to the extreme of death.

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. 1. P. 360. I. 4-4. " En-nîrmai".]

[1]Cp. Madame Guyon's Lines:—
"Thou moon! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To Him who calls the stars by name;
Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers:
Who blots, or brightens, all my years."

[2] "புல்லிக்கிடந்தேன் புடைபெயர்ந் தேனவ்வளவிலள்ளிக்கொள்வற்றே பசப்பு" I lay in his embrace, I turned unwittingly; Forthwith this here, as you might grasp it came on me. [Pope.]

[3] "காதலர்தொடுவுழி தொடுவுழி நீங்கி விடுவுழி விடுவுழி பரத்தலானே."

Cp: Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*:—
" And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,
" But rather famish them amid their plenty,
" Making them red and pale with fresh variety."

TOPIC 21.

All things are full of God; they can all tell us of God.

A doubt arose as to how Saints, drunk in love of God, could address lifeless flowers and senseless birds to carry messages to God? In verse I-4-5 for example, St. Nammâzhvâr, begs of a heron (Tam : *kuruku*,) to take compassion on him &c. Reply :—The beloved may be even like Sîtâ—the blessed dame of the Janak-race—and yet, in affairs of love to God, even stocks and stones may serve as messengers.[1] On one occasion, Bhattar was informed of the death of Nambiyéru-tiru-vudaiyân Dâsar (a low-caste bhakta) in such language as :—"He breathed away to the other world". Bhattârya chided them and said :—Ye should have said thus :—"He bid farewell here to go and join the service of the celestial hosts." When good men go to God, caste is of no account. So when messengers are for God, they may be even stones and plants and birds.

[Bhag : Vish. Bk. I. P. 371. I. 4-5. "Nalki-ttân."]

TOPIC 22.

The sweet agony of separation from God.

Thus sang St. Nammâzhvâr (I. 4-8. Ti-Vây-Mozhi) :—

"Though thee I bid, my young Pûvai,[2]
Go, tell my woe to that Mâlai,[3]

1. Cp : (*1*) "Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord !
Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford !—
[*Madame Guyon.*]

(*2*) "Ye linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise."—[*Ibid.*]

(*3*) "O sweet Kadamba say, has she
Who loved thy bloom been seen by thee?
If thou have seen her face most fair,
Say, gentle tree, I pray thee where?'
[Râma's Lament: Râmâyana III-61]

(*4*) [See Bhâgavata Purâna. X. Gopis' Laments.]

2. A bird.

3. 'Mâl' is a Tamil name for Vishnu meaning : 'He who attracts souls by His Beauty.' Or He who makes Himself 'insensible to reduplicated wrongs, and to set one attribute against another' [Vide p : 148. Dr. Faber's Creator and Creature.]

Who dwelleth far; yet stayest thou?
Well, my hue, grace, life, depart, know:
Hie hence and seek him who, thy bill
With tiny bits of food may fill."

Periya Tirumalai Nambi[1], on his death approaching, bid the drapery that hung across his holy place of worship, be drawn aside, and addressing his Diety—the Lord Krishṇa, who as child daily ate of butter offered by him—exclaimed in the Saint's words:—

" Then, my hue, grace, life, depart, know,
Hie hence and seek him who, thy bill
With tiny bits of food may fill."

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I. P. 384. I. 4-8" Nî-yalaiye."]

TOPIC 23.

Râma and Krishna—a humourous comparison.

" Râma once in his boyhood sported with his bow, and out of a boyish prank made Mandarâ a hump-back.[2] So, a story goes. "Such mischievous gambols can form no part of the programme in God's incarnation as Râma; all such mischief is designed for His incarnation as Krishṇa; so this must be foisted on Krishṇa's head!" some one said. To this, it was retorted; " Yes, Kṛishṇa is thy butt for every frolic, just as the saying: " all sin is on the Ṣramaṇa's head."[3] There was a wiseacre

1. One of the five Gurus of Râmânuja.

2. There is said to be in North India a Râmâyaṇa (4,0,000 verses) composed by Bhusunda Rishi, pourtraying in detail the boy-sports of Ṣri Râma.

3. Cp: the Kannada saying:—
"Anishtakke Ṣaneṣvara guri."Ṣramaṇa is a Jain who is low in the opinion of all Theists.

king to whom a complaint went. The complaint rose from the circumstance of a thief burglaring into a Brâhman's house, and the wall, as it was wet, settling on him and killing him. The thief's friends demanded of the Brâhman, compensation. Both parties appealed to the king for justice.

The King : " Brâhman ! the thief died because of your wet wall. Pay compensation."

Brâhman : " I do not know, Sire, ask the labourer who built the wall."

The King sent for the laborer and said :—" You laid the wet wall. You ought to pay.

Labourer : " No Sire ! the waterman poured too much water."

Waterman : " No Sire ! the pot-maker made the pot big."

Potter : "No Sire! while making the pot, a dancing-girl passed my way, and as my furtive glances were with her gaily engaged, my pot became big."

Dancing-girl : " No Sire, I went that way, because the washerman had failed to bring my clothes soon."

Washerman :—" No Sire ! when I went to wash, I had to wait, as a Ṣamana was washing on the stone." The Ṣamana (or ascetics belonging to the Jaina religion who keep the vow of silence) was in his turn now brought before the king.

King :—" It is all thy fault Ṣamana! pay for it "; and when on account of his vow the poor Ṣamana did not open his lips, said:—"Ah! silence is consent; he is the real culprit, hang him."

It is thus, laying every fault at poor Kṛishṇa's door![1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. I. p. 425 "Mâne-nôkki."—I-5-5.]

TOPIC 24.

God—The Ever-appetizing Nectar.

St. Nammâzhvâr called the Deity by the epithet of:—The ever-appetizing Ambrosia." "On this, Nambi Tiruvazhudinâdu Dâsar said:"While there was this sweet Ambrosia,—God Himself,—standing by their side, it is to me great surprise that those Deva beings—Were they of bovine fabric?—should have complacently (i.e., without shame) watched the ocean-churning with a view to its bringing forth but that salt water, the *so-called*

1. Oh! Christian missionaries, you who heap contumely on Sri Krishna's character, read this:—"Let me take one instance (the stealing of Gopis' garments by Krishna) which ignorant lips have used most in order to insult, to try to defame the majesty that they do not understand. But let me say this: that I believe that in most cases where these bitter insults are uttered, they are uttered by people who have never really read the story, and who have heard only bits of it and have supplied the rest out of their own imaginations. * * But the lesson is this: that when the soul is approaching the supreme Lord at one great stage of initiation, it has to pass through a great ordeal; stripped of everything on which it has hitherto relied, stript of everything that is not of its inner Self, deprived of all external aid, of all external protection, of all external covering, the soul itself, in its own inherent life must stand naked and alone with nothing to rely on, save the life of the Self within it. [pp: 102, 103, 104, Avatârs by A. Besant].

"I have seen Sri Krishna contrasted with Jesus of Nazareth to the detriment of Krishna, and a contrast is drawn between the purity of the one and the impurity of the other; the proof given was that the husbands were left while the wives went to play with and wait on the Lord. But I have read words that came from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. x-37); (also Matt. xix-29, and Luke xiv-26). * * * Why is that right when done for Jesus which is wrong when done for Sri Krishṇa?" [pp: 106-107 Avatârs by Annie Besant.]

It may here be noted that modern writers like Messrs: Dupuis and Volney are arguing in their works that the history of the life and miracles of Christ are borrowed from those of Lord Kṛishṇa.

Ambrosia (Amrita)[1] ?"

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. I. p. 471, " Amudam " I-6-6.]

TOPIC 26.

Nothing on God's side admits divorce.

St. Nammâzhvâr said :—" By what possible pretext that I can find, can I part with God ? On the score of vestiges of ignorance still remaining in me ? (but he has removed all !). On the score that He has removed all trace of my ignorance, but yet He elects to remain aloof ? (but He is with me !). Or on the score that He doth not heap on me blessing upon blesssing ? (but He is pouring torrents of them !). On the score that He expects me to return gratitude for gratitude ? (but He is in no need of such, being full !) On the score He is not beautiful ? (but He attracts me like the magnet !). On the score that He is not great enough ? (but He is Almighty, Exalted !). On the score that by my self-exertion I have obtained Him ? (but His grace alone has compassed this end for me !)." In what manner then is it possible to stigmatize the stainless Lord, in order to find an excuse for divorce ? Only this that on his Innocence it is possible for us to throw the dirt of our own sin, in the manner of the following anecdote :—

" A Brâhman son-in-law, a boy, went to his father-in-law's place. The latter being poor asked the boy's help to work a water-lift ; and working it together for a long time, the boy became tired ; and he thought of incensing the father-in-law by spitting upon him. He spat ; but " How *cool* !" exclaimed the elder, not minding the insult, and went on working the lift. Thereupon the boy left work saying :—" Then get some one else who will spit on thee *hot.* !" If we wish to throw odium on the innocent Lord, we can only do it with some of our own sin-contrived dodge like this boy.

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1. Lit : Immortality.

TOPIC 26.

God is bent on saving us.

Though *we* protest against being saved, God protests to save us at all hazards, as illustrated by Râma vowing thus at the sea side:—

" Triumphant to the southern shore,
Or Ocean's self shall be no more."

[*Râmâyana*, vi. 21-8.]

Here is a good story to illustrate this Truth:—" There was a Brahman, who was an abject miser; another was on his way to this man's house to get a breakfast. People on the way said to him:—" He is a most sordid wretch. He wont give you food." He said:—" Watch! before you all, in that very man's house I will have my food." He got to the miser, and showing his great need, begged him for a little food so that he may live. " I can't do it" he said. But " I can't leave you", the beggar continued. In order to escape the worry, " where is thy leaf (plate) then," asked the miser. " Here it is," the beggar opened his garment and showed it. Then the miser grumblingly said:—" He who intends cutting the throat certainly brings the sword with him," and could not help giving the provoking beggar a little rice and sauce to get rid of him.

Like this determined man of neediness is God who comes to save us, and we are like the miser resisting Him.[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. I. p. 510, " Yân-otti" I. 7-7,]

1. " In every part of the Scriptures we meet proofs of the liberality and goodness of God in the more than sufficient helps He grants sinners for enabling them to love him. Consider this God of charity standing at the door of the human heart; he is not satisfied with knocking once only, he continues to strike and speak to the soul, which refuses him entrance. *Arise, make haste, my love* (Canticles ii-10.) He is not discouraged by a first refusal; he puts *his hand to the key-hole* (Canticles V-4), and endeavours to open the door. He speaks aloud in the streets and public places; and in inviting the sinner to be converted, he uses reiterated entreaties, which never appear to him sufficiently eloquent." [Treatise on Love of God: p: 67. Ch: VIII Bk. II by Fr de Sales.]

TOPIC 27.

Faith and Love, the basis of certitude.

Where love to God is wanting, there doubt, ignorance and bewilderment prevail. Where love is strong there certitude is sure. In illustration of this the following incident is related :—

Bhattar was conducting his lecture-meetings, which a learned Pandit used to attend. Bhattar treated him with scant courtesy. A holy Ṣrîvaishṇava also used to frequent the assembly,—whom, on the other hand, Bhattar received with great respect. A third party who was a witness of this difference in treatment once reverently approached Bhattar and entreatingly asked :—" What, Sire! is the meaning of your indifference to the learned Pandit, and your particular attention to the other ordinary good man ? Pray solve me this puzzle." " Then, come to-morrow as usual," said Bhattar, " and watch. They also come as usual. And I will tell thee what." The morning came, the meeting began, and the Pandit first came and saluted. Bhattar received him with ordinary politeness, and asked : " Whom have you settled to yourself as the Ultimate Truth ?" He replied :—" Some authorities speak of Brahmâ (the Demiurge=the son=the appointed agent for creation) as the Ultimate Truth ; some speak of Vishṇu (the All-pervader—the Father) as the Ultimate Truth ; some speak of Rudra (the grandson—the appointed agent for destruction) as the Ultimate Truth. How is it possible for us to arrive at any conclusion?" So went he on saying. Then the holy man entered and saluted. Bhattar received him with great reverence and asked : " Pray who to you is Ultimate Truth ?" He said : " I know of no other than whom you daily dis-

course about—Nârâyaṇa, the Lord of Srî."[1] Bhattar again:—

"Pray, what other Truth is amiable to your thinking?" He replied:—"I know of no other Truth than what you are accustomed to preach to us daily viz., that the Means as well as the End of my salvation is no other than Râmânuja." "Excuse me for questions," Bhattar said, "and begged the holy Srîvaishṇava to return home. Then turning to the third party who had questioned Bhattar, he said:—"Dost thou mark the difference between the two? Now say, to whom I should bend; this or that? Dost thou now perceive the nature of truth?" The questioner expressed himself satisfied.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. I., page 571; "Mâyan" I. 9-6].

TOPIC 28.

God's Grace is free.

St. Nammâzhvâr said:—"What more do we need (for salvation)?" By this he meant that God's grace is our sole means of salvation, and nothing is needed on our part. "Is Grace then gratuitous? has it no conditions or preparations? Did not for example Râma implore the ocean's favour by previous preparations such as facing the East &c.[2]? And therefore, like seeking God by various means of self-effort, does not the means of resorting to Him alone for salvation—or resignation (*prapatti*)

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1 See note 1, p. 6. Bhag. Gitâ by the Author. Also p. 213, Tatva-Traya by S. Pârthasârathi Yogi:—"Sri (h), i. e., Sandhyâ or Reconciler.; Vidya, i. e., Sophia or Wisdom; Vâṇt, i. e., Logos or the Word." Also see note 1, p. 20. [or Topic 17: *The virtue of Mediation.*]

2. [Read Râmâyaṇa VI-21-1].

"Then sacred grass did Râma spread,
At ocean's shore, to lay his head,
Then to th' east he turned his face,
In rev'rence palms brought face to face"

or reliance on God alone, and ceasing of self-effort—also demand some conditions?", asked Vêlvetti-Nambiyâr, of Nambiḷḷai. Nambiḷḷai replied:—"But behold!, he who suggested to Râma the expediency of petitioning to the ocean, viz, Vibhîshana, did not himself, when *he* came to Râma as his Refuge, bathe in the ocean as a previous preparation. What do we infer from this? It was meet for Râma to adopt preliminary observances, becoming the race of Ikshvâku in which he was born; whereas the circumstance of birth, as one of the Râkshasa race, did not warrant any previous ceremony. The purport is that each one is to do what is proper to his station. Surrender to God therefore doth prescribe neither infringement of law when one by caste &c. is bound thereto, nor observance of law when one by caste &c. is not thereto bound. [Each man is proper in his place; each man to do the duties proper to his station. Thus no special conditions support God's grace, which operates unasked and unaided[1]] What is wanted is non-resistance or non-rejection when Grace is offered.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. I: p. 597: "Kaṇṇuḷḷe" I-10-2.]

TOPIC 29

God's grip of His elect.

St. Nammâzhvâr found his heart had overtaken him in its flight to God to enjoy with him the bliss of union. All of a sudden our Saint recollected how mean and insignificant a

1. Here is a good illustration taken from St. Fr: de Sales:—"God rouses us from sleep; consequently, we find ourselves awake, without having previously reflected on the circumstance." [P. 78. Ch. xii. Bk. ii. on Love of God.]

The Indian illustration is what is called the "mârjâla-kiṣora-nyâya" or "the method of the cat carrying its kitten in her teeth."

creature he was and how exalted and infinitely noble the Lord was, so that the very contact between an object, vile and abject like himself, and an object so pure and transcendent like God, seemed to him unworthy and unbecoming. Hence he thought it imperative on his part to flee from His embrace so that His purity may not get tainted by his own impure self,—flee and hide himself in some out of the way place where it would be impossible for his mind to have any thought of Him and where his tongue would no more attempt to speak of Him. But what happens? In the very place behind a ruined wall where he would hide himself away from God and where he would further cast a veil over his head to render himself more perfectly solitary and secure, so that no one could possibly encroach on his privacy and somehow manage to pronounce His Holy name, it so happened that a way-farer most suddenly turned up, and disburdening a load which weighed heavily on his head, cried: 'Srîman-Nârâyaṇa'. This sudden ejaculation all unawares, striking our Saint's ears, upset all his prior resolutions to forget God; and he found himself agreeably surprized, despite his determination, into recollections of the Lord and all that concerned Him. His heart swelling with devotion, he burst out in a pean of praise thus:—

செல்வ நாரணனென்ற சொல்கேட்டலும்,
மல்கும் கண்பனி நாடுவன் மாயமே;
அல்லு நன்பகலு மிடைவீடின்றி,
நல்கி யென்னை விடான் நம்பி நம்பியே.

" 'Blissful Lord', heard I; anon my eyes in floods did run,

'Oh What is this?' I asked. What marvel this? the Perfect one,

Through friendly days and nights, elects with me to e'er remain,

To union wooing me, his own to make; nor let me 'lone."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. I. p: 613. Ṣelva. i-10-8].

TOPIC 30.

God-the Guru in the heart.

In the lecture-assembly of Embâr, the subject of who is the first Spiritual Preceptor for the soul came to be discussed. "The Guru imparts to us the Scriptures," some said. Others opined: "The first is that godly man who helps to take us to the spiritual Preceptor for acceptance." "Not so," said Embâr, "the First Preceptor is that Universal Lord who is seated in our hearts, and who unseen, gives us the impulse *not to resist*, but *to yield* to the proposals for good services offered by the visible Preceptors or Helpers."

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. II. p. 720-1. "Ottâr" II-3-2]

TOPIC 31.

The victory of Faith.

There lived a saint by name Puṇḍarîka. He took it into his head to present a flower-garland to God by personally

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1. Cf. Saint Toṇḍar-aḍippoḍi Âzhvâr's (=Bhaktânghri-Reṇu) verse 34 of Tirumâlai.

உள்ளத்தே யுறையுமாலை உள்ளுவா
னுணர்வொன்றில்லா, கள்ளத்தே நானும்
தொண்டாய்த் தொண்டுக்கே கோலம்பூ
ண்டு, உள்ளுவாருள்ளிற்றெல்லா முடனி
ருந்தறிதியென்று, வெள்கிப்போ யென்னு
ள்ளேநான் விலவறச்சிரித்திட்டேனே.

"Supreme! not gifted with the ken
of those,
That feel Thee in their heart of
hearts, e'en I,
A seeming slave of Thine, a charlatan,
In all the glory of thy Bhaktas, clad—
But 'tis the outerman, the cheat inside
Admidst their conclave, aye, that nods its 'Yeas'.
Oh, teeming shame! which brims beyond limits;
And makes me outright laugh my 'gnoble self!"

going to Him as he rests in the Milky Ocean (*Kshîrâbdhi*)[1]. To reach this distant land, he went to the sea-shore (near Madras, Tiruk-kaḍal-mallai) and began to empty the ocean with his hands. To sound the depth of his faith, God put on the guise of a Ṣrî-Vaishṇava and approaching him asked:—Why hast thou undertaken this task? Puṇḍarîka explained to him his intention.

God: "Brother! is it possible for thee to empty the ocean, and go to the Lord of the Milky Ocean and present him the garland.

Puṇḍarîka: "If thou canst be of any good to me, help me in my design. Else go thy way."

God: "In that case, may I work with thee in thy labour?".

Puṇḍ: "If thou wilt do that, 'tis well and good." They both toiled together for a while in earnest; when, the ocean seemed drying up a bit. This made Puṇḍarîka's heart leap with joy, when the disguised God said: "Brother, I feel tired; canst thou fetch me some food and drinking water? I shall take them and rest a while; after which let us commence our operations, refreshed. Puṇḍarîka departed accordingly and brought food; bnt to his agreeable surprize, he saw the work

1. Among others, Read Vishṇu Purâṇa I-3-24:—and Ibid:V-I-32:—'Tadâgachchata' &c. Also see Harivamṣa; 3rd Part and *Tait*: *Up*: Nârâyaṇam: "*Ambhasya pâre*" *&c.* Kshîrâbdhi, and Nârayaṇa brooding over its waters, and resting there ready to incarnate at all times of necessity, are primeval accounts which are re-echoed in such passages of the Christians as: "the spirit of God moved over the waters" [*Genesis* i-2]; and: "And the eternal spirit, dwelling in a state of complete inaction and of supreme beatitude, awoke and detached itself for an indefinite period from the eternal Being &c." [IV-2-*ff*: The unknown life of Christ by Notovitch p: 142]. Those who hunt for esotery may read Awakened India, "Ṣesha-ṣayanam," Vol I: p: 56, and Indo-Aryan Mythology, by Narâyana Iyengar.

finished, and his own coveted Lord of Kshîrâbdhi resting in all his glory and grandeur on His couch, Sesha, and wearing in all splendour the very garland His great devotee Puṇḍarîka had intended to offer him ![1]

[Bhag: Vish; Bk, II. P. 835, "Kûṛudal" ii. 5. 11]

TOPIC 32.

God's all-absorbing love.

God is Love; for when He deigns, out of love, to commune with the saints, He becomes so absorbed in it as to forget for the time being everything else. St. Nammâzhvâr exclaimed:—"In union with me He doth not cast His eyes in any other direction." [XI. Ti: vây-mozhi II-6-2. "Ṣikkena"]. In connection with this, an incident is related in the life of

1. Cf :" Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you." [Matt: VII-7] "And Jesus answering said to them: Amen I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Take up and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done. [*Ibid*-XXI-21] "And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive." [*Ibid*: XXI-22]. "And Jesus said to the centurion : Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour. [*Ibid*: VIII-13] "And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him and touched the hem of his garment." "For she said within herself: If I shall only touch his garment, I shall be healed." "But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." [Matt: IX-20, 21, 22] And the Lord said: "If you had faith like to a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree: Be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the sea : and it would obey you" [Luke: XVII. 6].

Âḷavandâr.[1] Râma-miṣra [2] had told Âḷavandâr that Appan[3] had a (Yoga-) secret with him to communicate. In pursuance of this information, Âḷavandâr journeyed up to Gangaikonda-chôḷa-puram [4] to meet Appan. He found him deeply absorbed in Yoga near a short screen-wall. Not wishing to disturb him, he stood outside the wall waiting. But immediately Appan turned round and asked if it was not somebody there who belonged to the Ṣottai[5] pedigree? Âḷavandâr humbly approaching, introduced himself as such a person; and begged of Appan to tell him how he came to know of this fact though he (Âḷavandâr) had concealed himself behind the wall? Appan replied:—Because Him, who when enjoying with me would not allow Himself to be allured by the sweet blandishments and soft caresses [6] of even his eternally love-locked Spouse—the Universal Mother—, I now felt pressing on my neck, and turning round towards thy side three or four times. I thence inferred that to draw His attention this-wise, there must have been some one of the Ṣottai [5] family come."

[Bhag. Viṣh. Bk. II. P. 849. "Ṣikkena" II-6-2.].

TOPIC 33.

The magnetic influence of God's saving power of love, radiating through His saints.

The stream of the love of god to His saints is said

1. Or Yàmuna-muni or Yâmunâ-chârya (916. A. C.) the grandson of Nâtha-muni [vide pp: 184-185; Tatva-traya, by S. Pârthasârathi Iyengar.]

2. Or Manakkâl-Nambi (870. A. C.) Disciple of Nâtha-muni [Ibid.]

3. Kurugai-kkâval-Appan, the Disciple of Nâtha-muni. [Ibid.]

4. The place where the Holy grave of Nâtha-muni is.

5. The family name of Nâtha-muni.

6. Lit. " Even if her fair arms did bind Him to her breast."

to be so copious as to overflow the banks of their own individual limits and extend to all those who are devoted to the saints. Knowing this fact, the saints felt quickened to go forth unbidden and do evangelical service. They went among the worldlings with intent to form some connection or other with them so that a cause may thereby be created for God to save them. [This is the great secret of vicarious redemption, and also the mystery of the Incarnations. It is like one magnet transmuting by mere touch several iron filaments into its own virtue.] It is related of Sage Piḷḷai Lokâchârya that when he heard that his beloved Deity permitted Himself to be robbed near a village Âyakkudi, he also permitted himself to be robbed of his all. The Deity was delighted at this signal proof of his attachment, and promised salvation to all who were connected with him. Lokâchârya's benevolence so expanded with charity at the gift so obtained, that in order to secure salvation, he touched the ants and cast his gazes on the trees and so on; this act conforming with the text:—

"Though trees and rocks they be,
A touch of hand, a look from eyes
Suffice to save would be;
What wonder! saved are 'men with ties'." [1]
[Bhag: Vish. Bk. II. P. 929. "Aṇaivadu" II-8-1]

1. The original is thus:—

यंयंस्पृशतिपाणिभ्यां यंयंपश्यातिचक्षुषा ।
स्थावराण्यपिमुच्यन्ते किंपुनर्बान्धवाजनाः ॥

Also Cf: Harivamsa 206—44-45:—

सृजेदपिपरंलोकं संहरेदपिविद्यया ।
तेजोमूर्तिरिवाविद्धं इहलोकंचसंसृजेत् ॥
तिर्यग्योनीगतानाच कर्मभिर्निरयोपमैः ।
तानपिप्रतिमुच्येत ब्रह्मयुक्तेनचेतसा ॥

TOPIC 34.

The Hand of Wisdom stretched forth to save.

"Lend me the hand of wisdom," cried St. Nammâzhvâr. The following conversation is recorded on this figurative phrase. Mudaliyândân and Embâr were colleagues and disciples of Râmânuja. Once on an occasion Ândân was absent at Tirunârâyaṇapura, whilst Embâr remained in Ṣrîrangam. A disciple of Ândân stayed with Embâr some days. Embâr, on one occasion, asked the disciple if he had already secured his spiritual relationship with any pastor.

Disciple:—"The relationship with you is my relationship." Embâr administered to him the five-fold[1] sacraments enjoined for a Vaishṇava, and took him into his service. Thus did time go by, when Ândân returned to Ṣrîrangam. On learning this, the disciple returned to his old master, whom he served as before. Embâr, on coming to know this fact, hurried to Ândân and said:—

"I have committed a great offence (to you)."

Quoth Ândân:—"Not at all; if *two* men stretch their hands to a man fallen in a well, it is so much the more easy both for the riser and the raisers. So is the doubled spiritual hand of knowledge, the disciple has received from me and you both."[2]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. II. p. 986: "Îde" II-9-2].

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(1) The five sacraments are:

तापःपुंड्रस्तथानाम मंत्रोयागश्चपंचमः ।
अमीपरमसंस्काराः पारमैकान्त्यहेतवः ॥

(2) Cf: Vedântâchârya's eulogium on Râmânuja:
"Kudṛishti-kuhanâ-mukhe nipatatah Parabrahmaṇah
Kara-graha-vichakshaṇo jayati Lakshmaṇoyam munih"
(Hail to Saint Râmânuja, expert in holding out his hand to God, tumbled into the pit of the heretics).

TOPIC 35.

The conduct of the God-Ward and the worldling compared.

Nañjîyar used to relate :—I was used to follow Piḷḷai-tiru-naraiyûr Araiyar and Bhattar (my spiritual elders) when they went on a visit to the temples. I observed them leisurely pacing about the premises, eagerly taking note of all the features thereof, viz., of the holy turrets, the blessed mansions and so on, as if they drank them in with their eyes. But there were others who (unmindful to every surrounding beauty) ran on with race-horse speed ! ". [This is to show that the Temple of God is our real Home where we must stay and serve for ever. To the worldling it is a place to hurry away from].

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. II, p. 1035—6. " Valam " II. 10-8]

TOPIC 36.

Our incapacity to enjoy the Omnipresent God.

Ṣrî-râma-ppiḷḷai [1] (the younger brother of Parâṣara Bhattar) asked of Bhattar this question when he was in Tiru-kkôttiyûr :—" I find that St. Nammâzhvâr, so far, is not distressed (1) because he longed for the happiness of Heaven, and he could not obtain it by reason of its existence in far-off regions of space [2] ; and (2) is not distressed because he longed to enjoy God in his Incarnations,[3] and he was debarred from doing so as his nativity was subsequent to those events ; but his distress is now seen to arise after God was pleased to appear to him in His Worshippable modes (*archâ*) manifest in all the Holy Places [on this earth], and after too specially manifesting Himself to

1. Called also Vyâsabhattar. Both sons of Ṣrivatsâṅka-miṣra (Râmânuja's chief disciple).

2. Called the *Manifestation Supreme* (vide. P. 130. Tatva-Traya, by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr).

3. Called the *Manifestation Distinctive* (*Ibid*).

The other Manifestations are :— the *Operative*, the *Pervasive*, and the *Worshippable* (*Ibid*).

him in His Holy Adytum, the Hill of Tirumâliruñjolai [near Madhura, South India] ; and I should after this have expected that the Saint would have gone on more and more revelling [1] in the bliss of union with God here. Whence then doth his anguish come ? ".

Quoth Bhattar :—" God is one, and therefore He is present everywhere. His solidarity is not affected whether the manifestation be *Supreme* (Para), *Operative* (Vyûha), *Distinctive* (Vibhava) or *Worshippable* (Archa). If any differences among them are perceived, they are due more to the corrupt understanding of the perceiver, than of God who is Omnipresent.[2] God is Immense and Infinite. By going to the sea-side, we see of the sea only as much of it as our eye apprehends. Hence the saint could not say he became satiate when he was given the Divine Beatific Vision with all its attributes of transcendent Beauty &c., through the medium of Azhagar.[3] Because God is endless, the saint could not with his limited capacity reach the end of it. It is like a man dying with thirst : fresh fragrant water is near, but (like Tantalus) he cannot drink as his mouth is sealed up.[4] In this manner, God is near, and God is limitless ; on the other hand, the saint's craving is great but he cannot limit the Limitless. The Saint realizes this difficulty and his agony thus is consequent on the small range of the powers of his senses and of his mind.

[Bhag : Vish. Bk. III. p. 1096 ; " Munnîr, " III—2].

1. Cf: (*a*) " But bliss resembling that of saints above,
Sprung from the vision of Almighty Love :
Firm, solid bliss ; for ever great and new ;
The more 'tis known, the more admired as true."
(*b*) Bh : Gî : " Yam labdhvâ &c."
(*c*) Bhâg : Pur : XII-12-51 : " Tadeva."

2. "The kingdom of heaven is within you." [Luke XVII-21].

3. The epithet of God manifest in the Holy Hill mentioned *supra*.

4. Lock-jaw or some such cause.

TOPIC 37.

The inordinate thirst of saints for God, or love to God insatiable.

It is related of Jîyar-nâyanâr [the grandson of Maṇavâḷa-mâmunigal] that he once came from Âzhvâr-Tirunagari[1] to Ṣrîrangam on a holy mission with respect to Âzhvâr. Here he was seized with the malady known as "sun-set and sun-rise," as between sun-set and sun-rise was all night-time during which was interrupted the otherwise continuous performance of Divine services to Ṣrî Raṅganâtha[2] (God-Resident of Ṣrîraṅgam). Nâyanâr's avidity for enjoying God was so great as not to permit of delay by any interruption. The (figurative) malady of "sun-set, sun-rise," produced the (figurative) lock-jaw; and he exclaimed thus:—"If by thirst unquenched, my mouth be locked in and cannot be forced open, why do ye not cut my belly open, and introduce water by that way so as to allay my burning thirst?".[3]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. III. p. 1096. "Munnîr" III-2].

1. South-east of Trichinopoly, near Tinnevelly, the place where St. Nammâzhvâr is sanctified and enshrined. [Vide Our *Lives of Saints*.]

2. God in reclining posture, on bed of "time" symbolized as serpent. He is the same who was worshipped by Râma, and given by him to his votary Vibhîshaṇa on the occasion of his (Râma's) installation ceremony in Ayodhya: Vide Râmâyaṇa VI (Yuddh)-131-85: "Labdhvâ kuladhanam &c."

3. Cf: "Oh, depth immense! Oh, fathomless and impassable gulf! in which my whole being is absorbed and lost." [Thomas à Kempis: Imit: Chr:]

Cf: "We are only prevented from loving God infinitely, because our will, which receives the impression of this love, cannot exceed the limits of its capacity" [St. Fr: de Sales, Love of God, Ch: I, Bk III-p: 107]. "O Love! how extreme is my ardour to possess you." [St: Fr: de Sales]. 'Let me die of love for thee, O God of charity!" [St. Francis]. St. Catharine of Genoa and St. Theresa, consumed with the burning thirst of Divine love, implored of their Saviour to *give* them *the* refreshing *water* of eternal life. [*John*, IV. 15]. "O Divine Love! when wilt Thou replenish and absorb every faculty of my soul?" [St. Fr: de Sales.]

TOPIC 38.

The use and abuse of the body.

Thus did Embâr lament:—Alas! that I have misused my (God-given) body! and have thus compassed for myself iniquity and ruin! When I could have steered this boat of my body aright to the haven of Heaven's beatitude, I have allowed it to be carried away by the current (of the world) and to capsize into its surf! [1].

[Bhag: Vish. Bk: III. p. 1101, "Munnîr" III. 2-1.]

TOPIC 39.

Absence of God is pain and sickness.

When saints talk of pain and sickness, they mean the pain of worldly existence, or the pain accruing from the absence of God. With reference to why worldly existence, destitute of the knowledge of God, is called pain, the story of Upakosala is related. He served his Âchârya (spiritual Teacher) for a long time, but received no instruction from him. The Âchârya took it into his head to absent himself for a while from home, and commanded the disciple to tend the Holy fire in all devotion during his absence. Upakosala obeyed the command, but with melancholy in his heart that his Âchârya should bestow spiritual instruction on many other disciples, but deny or delay the same to himself. At this juncture, the Âchârya's wife accosted him thus:—" Son Upakosala! come to dinner." He mournfully answered:—" Mother, I am (already) gorged with

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1. Cf: (*a*) शरीरमाद्यंखलुधर्मसाधनम् ।

(*b*) विचित्रादेहसम्पात्तिरीश्वरायनिवेदितुं ।
पूर्वमेवकृताब्रह्मन् हस्तपादादिसंयुता ॥

(*c*) Read the commentarry of Âcchân Pillai on verse I. Tiru-neḍun dânḍakam (திருநெடுந்தாண்டகம்).

(the food of) sickness,"[1] implying that worldly existence (without knowledge of God) is pain. Secondly, absence of God is spoken of as pain, for in the case of Bharata, do we not know that cause of pain was not any kind of physical malady such as remittent fever, but mental pang caused by separation from Râma?

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. III. p. 1101, "Munnîr" III. 2-1.]

TOPIC 40.

Cultivating love to God is in itself an end.

"Our constant prayer should be for eternal service to God," St. Nammâzhvâr tells us. The very act of cultivating love, even before the reaping of its fruit viz., divine service, is itself an end fraught with felicity. So have the Vaishṇava saints decided.[2] The illustration of this principle is afforded by the example of Lakshmaṇa who said to Râma [*Râmâyaṇa.* II. 31. 23 ff]:—

"My hands shall spade and basket bear,
And for thy feet the way prepare.
I'll bring thee roots and berries sweet,
And woodland fare which hermits eat.

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1. Vide Chh. Up. IV-10. "*Upakosala ! Brahmacharin abhyavahârârtham âgachha &c.*"

2. Cf. (1) "Oh, that I were able to serve Thee all the days of my life! that I were able to serve Thee truly though but for one day! Thou art everlastingly worth of all service, all honour, and all praise! Thou art my gracious Lord, and I am Thy poor vassal, under infinite obligations to serve Thee with all my strength and perpetually to celebrate Thy glorious name." [Thomas á Kempis Imit: Chr: VIII: Bk III. p: 198.]

(2) Read Râmânuja's Śaraṇâgati-Gadya for *nitya-kainkarya- prârthana.*—"To know God, love God and serve God" is Râmânuja's message to mankind: On service to God, read Dr Faber's Creator and Creature: p: 98 ff.

Thou shalt with thy Videhan Spouse (Sîta)
Recline upon the mountain's brows;
Be mine the toil, be mine to keep
Watch o'er thee waking or asleep."

A funny anecdote is here related:—A certain Brâhmaṇa went to the house of his neighbour to invite him for an obsequial dinner. Not finding him at home, he left word with his wife. The wife forgot to communicate the tidings immediately on the husband's arrival home; but, recollecting, delivered it just when time for dinner had approached. He waxed wrath and beat her, growling to her in these accents:—" Alas! so late thou tellest me this! I have lost all the pleasures of anticipation by brooding over the dinner before time. While so where is there time for at least discussing it leisurely?"

[Bhag. Vish: Bk. p. 1142-43, "Ozhivil" III. 3-8].

TOPIC 41.

God's mercy and justice harmonized.

When Râma decided on co-ercing the King of the ocean to put in his appearance, by driving a shaft into his bosom, the Ocean-King was struck with terror. He forthwith appeared and made his obeisance. Seeing him thus capitulate and sue for terms, Râma became pacified; but informed the Ocean-King that his bow was never lifted in vain. Once lifted, its fury must vent itself somewhere. He said:—

" 'This spell is ne'er invoked in vain.
Where shall the magic shaft, to spend
The fury of its might, descend?'
'Shoot,' Ocean cried, 'thine arrow forth
With all its fury to the north,'

where the vile race of the Âbhîras dwell.'" This is to show

that as soon as sinners capitulate and turn their face to God, God gives them pardon, and transfers the punishment prepared for them to their enemies. This is the way God's law of retribution is fully justified, while the rights of his goodness remain intact.[1]

In illustration of this, Bhattārya relates a comic anecdote. There was a land-holder whose head was bald. He was busy measuring out the new harvested paddy of his lands. A beggar approaching him said —

Sir, "How is it you are busy with the grain, while your fine locks are uncared for ?"

Land-Holder : "What brings thee here" ?

Beggar : "Nothing particular ; simply to see thee."

L. H : "Good ; wilt thou have one sack of grain ?"

So saying, he helped the sack even on to the beggar's head to carry (flattered by him).

The beggar was going his way, when a way-farer inquired where he got the grain from.

Beggar : "There, from that man, the bald-headed.'. The way-farer went to the land-holder and told him the impolite way the beggar spoke about him. Thereon the land-holder

1. "The divine goodness and justice are like two arms to God ; but goodness is the right arm, which begins and accomplishes almost everything, with which He wishes to appear in all His works. If men allowed it to guide them, it would load them with benefits in keeping with its munificence. There is a sort of division between goodness and justice: all beginnings belong to goodness ; thus all things in their first institution are very good. Justice extends only to what is added, which is sin. But there is this difference , that justice never takes anything from the rights of goodness. On the contrary, goodness sometimes anticipates those of justice ; for, by pardon, it is exercised upon sins, which are the proper matter for justice" [Bossuet].

grew wroth and gave the beggar a hot pursuit. The beggar turning round said :—

"Eh ! Sir, what makest thee to run in this fashion, thy fine locks so dancing ?"

The pride of the land-holder was thus flattered again, and his anger departing, said, (forgetting his own baldness) :—

"Friend ! I ran after thee that thou mayst receive from me and carry another sack of grain."

[When anger turns to friendship, by praise even among men, how much more so is God won by dependence and devotion !

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. III. p. 1171. "Vêṅgaḍam," III. 3-6]

TOPIC 42.

God desires our heart.

God sets greater value upon the devotion of the heart (Searcher of hearts as He is) than the material value of outward offerings which may be made. God hates hypocrisy, and estimates the sincerity of the soul.[1] The outward offerings may be trifles, but in God's eye, they carry much weight when offered in humility and devotion. This is the burden of the celestial song,—the Bhagavad Gîta (ix—26) :—

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1. Cf. (*a*) "My son, give me your heart" [Prov: XXIII-26] "For the bed is so narrow that the one or the other must necessarily fall out ; and the cloak so short that it cannot cover both at once." [Isa : XXVIII-20]

(*b*), We have no right to eat, or drink, or recreate ourselves without seeking with more or less determinate intention the four-fold glory of God as our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and last End: and a mere mental reference to Him by a loving heart is sufficient thus to ennoble our most trivial doings, and to fasten it firmly to the throne of God, [*p* : 220. Dr. Faber's Creator and Creature].

" Whoso shall offer Me in faith and love
A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water poured forth,
That offering I accept, lovingly made
With pious will . . . . "

As illustrating this, the following tradition is recorded :—

" The Champaka blossoms are favourite to Ṣri Purushottama [God Resident in Jagannâtha, Orissa]. On one occasion, some princes had a desire to offer these flowers. Going to the flower-market they found all flowers had been sold, a single one alone being left. In buying it, competition rose amongst them, and they bid and bid till one of them staked all the enormous fortune he had, bought the flower and offered it to Jagannâtha. [=the Lord of the Universe]. That night God appeared in the prince's dream and said :—" (The debt of) thy flower is very heavy. I cannot bear its weight," thus showing his gracious acceptance of the sincerely made offering, so much so as to be even beyond God's capability to repay.[1]

[Bhag. Vish: Bk. III. p. 1175-6, ' Ṣumandu," III. 3-7].

TOPIC 43.

Pride and humility contrasted.

Piḷḷai-ppiḷḷai used to say :—" Look ! where we *ten* of us could squeeze ourselves in the passage here near the Punnai tree,[2] see these single individuals of the world with their hairy

1. (*a*) It is written by St. Fr. de Sales:—" We read in Exodus that goat's hair was offered in the temple, in the Old Law and that this offering was graciously accepted. This was a figure of the merit and reward, attached in the law of grace to the least actions dictated by charity, (charity= disinterested love to god). [" Treatise on Love of God P. 107. Ch. II. Bk. III.]

(*b*) Read the whole of Dr Faber's Chapter: "In what way God repays our love " [The Creator and the Creature].

2. Near the holy pond, Chandra-pushkaraṇi in the compound of Ṣriraṅgam Temple.

humpy shoulders, potty bellies, and gaudy raiments, push and elbow us past here?" [Contrasting God-sick reduced people with worldlings swollen with selfish pride] 1

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. III. p. 1263; "Vambu" III. 5-4].

TOPIC 44.

Intoxicated with love of God.

If men are drunk with the love of God, they ought to dance like madmen in the streets. If they cannot, they are not love-smitten", says St. Nammâzhvâr. The tradition of Miḷagâlvân 2 is here narrated:—

A certain Râja (averse to Vaishṇavism) built a cluster of houses for purposes of presentation to the poor. Miḷagâlvân (Vaishṇava of course) went to him and asked:—

"Sire! Grant me a portion thereof;"

Râja:—"*You* cannot have one";

Mila:—"Why, is it that I am not learned in the Vedas and the Ṣâstras? if so, examine me."

Râja:—"That is not the reason; you are worthy in all that; but you are disqualified, inasmuch as you belong to the sacred cult (of the Vaishṇavas; as you are a follower of Râmânuja)."

Mila:—"Is that it? Oh! how glad I am. I had not thought of myself as really worthy to be called a Vaishṇava; but by thy lips at least I am made to deserve that name." So saying, he gathered up his garment, threw it up in the air, and danced

1. Cf. "Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong." [Madame Guyon.]

"The pride of them that hate God ascendeth continually." [Psalms lxxiii].

2. The disciple of Râmânuja.

for very joy.[1]

[Bhag. Vish: Bk. III. p. 1268. "Ṣâdu-Ṣanam" III-5-5].

TOPIC 46.

The conditions of salvation illustrated.

An incident illustrative of some of the main features distinguishing between the two Incarnations of God, Râma and Krishna, is thus related :—"Srî Râmânuja had in his sanctum of worship, Lord Krishna as child [Krishna who wanted to eat butter every day]. One day a Srîvaishṇava brought to him the image of Lord Râma, upon which Râmânuja exclaimed :—"Ah! He who did not set the spiritual rule: "Make Me thy sole Refuge" is pleased to come!" The allusion here is to the tone of loving command implied in Lord Krishna's Teaching *(Bhag :Gî: XVIII-66)* :—

"And let go those :—
Rites and writ duties! *Fly to Me alone!*
Make me thy single Refuge! I will free
Thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer! ;"

as contrasted with Lord Râma's declaration to Sugrîva *(Râmâyaṇa: VI. 18. 3)*—on the occasion of Vibhîshaṇa's seeking Râma's protection—:—

1. Cf. "No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them."
[Madame Guyon].

Cf, "Be not impatient, My son, when men think evil of thee* * * * Thy own opinion of thyself should be much lower than others can form [Thom: à Kempis. ch. xxxi-Bk. iii, P. 234] "The opinion and reports of men are as various as their persons, and are, therefore entitled to little credit. Besides it is impossible to please all" [Id. ch. xxvii. Bk. iii, P. 250] "Like one deaf, let what is said pass by thee unnoticed, that thou mayest keep thy thoughts fixed on "the things that belong unto thy peace" [Id. ch. xxxiv. Bk. iii, P. 26].

"Nor my protecting aid refuse
When one in *name of friendship sues.*"

Here a discussion arose, as to whether the command imported by the passsge: "Fly to Me alone, Make Me thy sole Refuge," did not simply mean non-opposition (on the part of the soul) when grace is offered? This negative attitude alone is not sufficient but a positive attitude of preference or predilection for God is required. This is the import. But what does predilection signify? It means purity of love for God above all things; and this purity is as difficult of attainment as the highest stage of intense and fervid love. The statement, that no more than "affectionate yielding" on the part of the soul is demanded as price of salvation, is made for the purpose of proving the infinite mercy and condescension on the part of God. If one should begin to enumerate the qualifications needed on the part of man to deserve Grace, it would begin with that hardest of attainments, viz., "Implicit trust in, and abandonment to, God [= mahâ-vişvâsa]. Is not this much at least albeit the rarity of such an accomplishment—needed, viz., the first step on the Way to Salvation? A traveller on the wide ocean is found to trust himself to a bit of wood (ship), taking with him provisions and water for six months. Must not man have some such confidence at least in God, (as Means of Salvation) when he means to launch into that bigger and endless Divine Ocean?[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. III p: 1331-32. "Tuyarame,' III-6-8].

1. (*a*) Here are two principles stated: (1) The ineffable abundance of God's grace, and (2) necessity of consent on the part of the creature both combining to effect the work of salvation. The connection between these two factors is elucidated by the following passages:—

"We cannot prevent the inspirations of grace from exciting our hearts, but we can resist their impulse, and thereby reject them. (*-pratishedha*).

"Let us revert to the birds mentioned by Aristotle; the wind raises them, but will not enable them to proceed far, unless by extending their wings, balancing their bodies and plunging the air, they second the power of the breeze; if attracted by the appearance of some verdant spot, or benumbed from having lain a long time motionless, they neglect to profit by the rising breeze and fall again to the ground, they may indeed be said to have felt the wind, but it has been useless to them, because they failed to profit by the facility it afforded them for flying.

"Thus we are aroused or excited by the inspirations of grace; in following their attractions, we co-operate with or second their power; but, by refusing our consent, we reject them. The voice of grace can speak to our hearts without our concurrence; but our co-operation is necessary for yielding to its inspirations."

[St: Fr: de Sale's Treatise on Love of God Bk. ii: Ch: xii: P: 78-79.]

(*b*) "The breath of inspiration is this propitious impulse of the Holy Ghost (= *Antaryâmin*) by which we are lifted up and borne on high in the atmosphere of divine love. It insinuates itself into the will, and produces therein sensations of spiritual pleasure; it awakens our natural inclination to embrace what is good, and makes use of that inclination to take possession of our heart; it develops and increases this disposition, as the wind unfolds the wings of the bird. All this takes place without our free co-operatian; it is a gratuitous favour on the part of God who prevents us with his blessings. If our heart yields to the action of this heavenly wind which develops our natural inclination, we may date from this epoch the commencement of our happiness; because, when grace has once seized on us, it will unite its active exertions to our trivial efforts, it will join its powerful operations to our weak concurrence, and will conduct us from one degree of love to another, until we attain to that purity of faith necessary for our justification."

[Ibid: Ch: xiii. Bk. II. p: 79.]

(*c*) "* * * give me the first inclination to follow thee, for I cannot awake of myself, nor move without thy assistance; but when thou shalt have helped me to take the first step, then, O Beloved Spouse of my soul! we shall run together; thou shalt go before me, attracting me powerfully to follow closely; and I shall run after thee and faithfully yield to thy attractions."

[Ibid. Ch. xiii. Bk. ii p: 82.]

(*d*) "* * the course of grace is stopped by diverting and confining its streams, and not suffering them to flow back to their divine source. For the influences of God's spirit are in large measures poured only upon the truly thankful."

[Thom: à Kempis. Im: Chr: Ch. x. Bk iii p: 152]

(*e*) "Jealous, and with love o'er flowing

God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part."
"Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal will regard." [Madame Guyon].

(*f*) Extract from St. Pârthasârathi Aiyangar's Famous Book, called the "Word-Jewel" sent for the use of the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893, Pp. 31-32:—

The series of provisions made by God for the salvation of souls &c.

God's superabundance of gratuitous grace.

408. "While, in the Thrice-great Sphere, God sees all's full,
His blest heart, drooping as if wholly starved,
[*Vide* the discription of the hundred-sheep shepherd who goes after his *one* straying sheep. Matt. xviii, 12-13; Luke xv, 4-6; Ezek. xxxiv, 6, 11]
To strayed souls, flies and sticks (as sire's heart flies
And sticks to his son who in strange lands roams);
Grieves for sinners' being so far from Him;
Grants them organs and frames,—Communion-fit,
And powers to use all these Communion-means;
Himself's unseen, lest they should say—"be gone!"
Yet, not able to part, indwells and hugs,
By penetrating their soul essences' self,
As mothers bear on backs, children that sleep);
For He His children knows, though they not Him.
[Cf. Aurelius, V 4:—I will march..................suffers me to tread upon it.]

* * * * *

Man's non-refusal of and concurrence with grace.

413. "Conclude we, therefore, that God takes
unknown virtues *alone*
As Him appeasing offering
And show'rs grace erst unknown,
Cf. "Divine love is also a child of grace and benediction, because the will cannot conceive it without the assistance of the holy ghost who himself forms it in the heart." [St: Fr. de Sales. "On love of God" Ch. vi-Bk i. p: 13].

[The further refinements of this very subtle Theological Theme may be studied in this wonderful book,—a book which—difficult to a superficial reader—bids fair in due time to become the wonder of the world]

(*g*) For the more polemical and dialectical aspect as bearing on this subject, Râmânuja's commentaries with Srutaprakâsikâchârya's elaborate gloss thereon on the Vedânta-Sûtras ii-3-40 (*Parât tu &c.*) and ii-3-41 (*Kritaprayatna &c*). may be read, where the subject of Freewill as the greatest gift to man, its function, God's grace, and its method of operation are throughly discussed.

[*Note.* From fear of diffuseness, I do not enlarge on this note, though I fain would, but I would call the reader's attention to the fine disquisition on "grace working by law": [p: 144-147, A new Analogy by Cellarius.]

TOPIC 46.

"The love of the Marvellous" illustrated by the "Two and Four-Arm" controversy.

Once on a time when Bhattar happened to be at Tirukkôttiyûr, Anandâzhvân inquired of him whether God is seen in His Celestium (=*parama-pada*) as with *two* arms or with *four* arms? He replied:—"The Ekâyanas[1] mention two arms, and our people four."

Quoth Âzhvân: "Then which is correct?"

Bhattar: "If thou seest two arms, take it for Periya-perumâḷ[2]; if four, take it for Perumâḷ."[3]

The fact was that those who had spiritual eyes saw four (arms and even more).

[Bhag: Vish: Bk III. p: 1364. "Âḷum" 111. 7-2.]

TOPIC 47.

'Two and Four Arm' discussion (continued).

Again, Nilâttukkuri Bhagavar to Bhattar:—"Is there any authoritative text to show that God is seen in His Celestium (= *Vaikuntha*) with four arms?'

Bhattar:—"Is 'nt there this text: "He, the Beyond matter, the Nourisher; He with the discus, shell and mace &c'"? (by Mandodari, the widow of Râvâṇa). Seeing the questioner silent and offended, Bhattar continued:—"Is 'nt this authority satisfying?"[4] [Also Hanuman alluded to *many* arms (=bâhavah of Râma, Râmâyaṇa-VI-3-15].

[Bhag: Vish: Bk III. pp: 1365. "Âḷum" III-7-2.]

1. These are the Mâdhvas.

2. The stationary image of Ranga-nâtha in the innermost sanctuary of the Śrîrangam Temple, represented with two arms (but four arms visible to the occult votaries).

3. The image with four arms,—moveable, and fitted for processions and other honors of worship.

4. Vishṇu is described as with four arms in all the Purâṇas and

other works, and is also known to have so incarnated. As Krishna incarnate, His parents Vasudeva and Devaki saw Him *four*-armed ; Arjuna prayed in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ (XI-46):—" Fain would I see thee in that *four*-armed Form," and Paundraka-Vâsudeva—the Enemy of Krishna—imitated Him thus. As Râma incarnate, Mandodari, the widow of Râvana, saw Him as with four-arms and Agastya addressed Him : " Thou art Nârayaṇa the Ancient, the Four-Armed. " *Uttara Râmâyana* " 8-26. The Sarcasm involved in Bhattar's reply is meant to teach that *four-armedness* need not necessarily be a sign of Divinity,—a sign to claim allegiance from mankind—, nor that without it is Divinity not proved ! Opportunely we received a communication from St. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr, dated 22nd August 1900, Wednesday, Lucknow, which is to the point:—" The perverse childishness in professing to see something *peculiarly divine* in a six-handed or four-handed form, in contra-distinction from a two-handed form, belonging to one and the same Svarûpa, provokes only my smile. As to a four-handed *human* form, I saw one such form embalmed in the Fyzabad Museum. Would *that* be *upâsya* (worthy of worship) ? ". Also,—with regard to Incarnation itself, God need not be prevented from taking birth among men, *as man*, and behave *like men*. Krishna exclaimed to the peasants:—I am born as one of you." Râma:—" I think of me but of the mankind" . " The life of Jesus Christ," says Cellarius, "from His birth to his death was, with one exception to be noted presently, a purely natural human life ; this is what the Christian instinct has apprehended under the doctrine of His perfect manhood. * * * "

"His birth was that of other men. His early years were those of a working-man in a village home. We are informed * * * that He felt all the common bodily wants—hunger, thirst, pain, weariness—and shared the common blameless weaknesses of humanity—such as temptation, doubt, surprise, disappointment, and even embarrassment. * * * "

"He discharged excellently all the common relationships of life such as son, brother, master, servant, host, guest, friend, citizen, patriot and king ; thereby showing how, out of the common stuff of nature's manufacturing, a religious life might be lived on earth and by man.'' [P. 156-157. A New Analogy.]

Cf: " If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead " , said Christ (Luke : 16-31).

Cf, "The hour came and the moon broke, and if they see any sign, they will not believe and say this is charm that has been performed.'' [Separa No. 27 Surat 'Algamar ' Ayat I.]

[Page 560, Vol. 37. 1895. Nineteenth Century, Dr. Martineau on Balfour's Foundation of Belief].—" That they could dispense with miracles, yet live on in consciousness of Divine relations, shows an attitude of mind touched by a deeper piety than that which cannot wake

TOPIC 48.

Honour due to visible Saints.

To discover saintliness in saints apart from their outward appearances requires more than ordinary ken in the onlooker. A good man by name Pi!!aiyâttân approached (the saintly) Nañjîyar, and besought him to instruct him once in the Drâvid-opanishad.

Nañjîyar: "Nambi!!ai (disciple of Nañjîyar) will do that well for thee. Go to him pray."

Âttân: "But I may be required to prostrate to him?"

Nañjîyar: "I see! But thou mayst behave thyself as it may please thee;" and he sent for Nambi!!ai and ordered him to take Âttân through a course of the Upanishad, putting him under no disciplinary forms or ceremonies. Âttân read on as far as the Decad "Payilum," [T. V. Mozhi iii-7-1], but when he came to that, which treated of veneration due to living saints even more than to God, he turned penitent and humbly besought Nambi!!ai that he be treated as an humble disciple and he be subjected to all external rules of discipline, such as prostrating &c., but Nambi!!ai declined to act otherwise than as commanded by his Master. Âttân then in remorse, betook himself to Nañjîyar, and supplicatingly submitted to him that he was unaware of the worthiness of saints before, but now

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till it is salted by science and wonders."

On accidentally turning over the pages of *Pattanatthu Pillaiyâr's* Holy Songs, we chanced upon the following :—"மாத்தான வத்தையுமாயா புரியின் மயக்கத்தையு, நீத்தார் தமக்கொருநிட்டையுண்டோ நித்தனன்புகொண்டு, வேர்த்தாற் குளித்துப் பசித்தாற்புசித்து விழித்துயின்று, பார்த்தாலுலகத்தவர்போலிருப்பாரபற்றற்றவரே". *Trans*: "The saints crucified to the world, will bathe when they like, eat when hungry; sleep when tired—to all appearances seeming like unto other men, &c."

"There is perhaps no other human sentiment so prolific of evil consequences to mankind as the love of the marvellous [P: iii "Key to Ghostism" by Rev: T: Mitchell.]

that he had come to know the same, he implored that thence forward he might be treated as an humble disciple.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. III. p. 1370. "Nâthanai" III-7-3].

TOPIC 49.

God and the Godly Compared.

To think of God as low in our esteem is to think of Him as having no power to cleanse our sins; but to think on God's saints as higher than even God Himself in our esteem is, a rare virtue (for men may be found who hold God in esteem, but few are found who hold God's saints in greater esteem.) To illustrate this, the following incident is related of Vîra-ppiḷḷai and Pâlikai-vâli-ppiḷḷai, the two favourite disciples of Nañjîyar:—They went together on travel once on friendly terms. Some misunderstanding between them having arisen, they gave up talking to each other. Nañjîyar seeing this, admonished them thus:—My sons! how can one Brother be offended against another and be reserved like this? The cause of hate and anger arises because, either wealth and lust have not been eschewed; or things of God have not been felt of great worth. On receiving this reprehension, they both rose, prostrated to him and at once restored themselves into each other's affection. [This illustrates that Brotherhood among

1. Saints are apostles appointed by God on earth. God is tabernacled in them and speaks through their mouth. Read St. Pârthasârathi Aiyangar's 'Word—Jewel' from sentence 436 onwards, of Division 6, called "the Teacher's Saving Power." St: Francis de Sales tells us that "the Holy spirit specially resides, animating the body of the church, and speaking by the mouth of the bishops, according to the promise of the Son of God." [P. 84. Ch. XIV. Bk: II. on Love of God.]

men is even a higher virtue than Fatherhood of God].[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. III, p. 1371. Nâthanai" iii. 7-3].

TOPIC 50.

One moment of bereavement from God is an age.

The delay—in not realizing the Beatific Vision of God for which St. Nammâzhvâr so much panted—became so insupportable to him that in the Decad of Tiruvây-mozhi commencing with "mudiyâne" (iii-8.), the saint's consuming yearning reached such excess as to make him doubt whether even the unconscious sense-organs in his body had not more intelligence than himself and had not really excelled him in the desire to find God and whether each sense did not long to possess, singly, all the delights of the other senses put together.[2] To saints each moment of separation from their

1. Cf. "A servant of God must not be contentious but mild and sweet towards all men, and be patient and apt to learn." [2 Tim ii: 24.].

"Abstain from all debates, and you will diminish the number of sins" [Eccl. XXVIII. 10].

Cf. (a) "Let us not render any one evil for evil." [Rom: xii-17] „ Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. " [Matt. vi-12] "Let all sorts of harshness,, choler, and indignation be banished from amongst you, and be ye sweet and merciful one to another, pardoning one another, as God has pardoned you &c." [Eph: iv-31].

"Forgive and ye shall be forgiven" .[Luk: vii-37]

2. Cf. Venus to Adonis [Shakespear].

"Had I no eyes, but ears, my ears
would love
That inward beauty and invisible;
Or, were I deaf, thy outward parts
would move
Each part in me that were sensible:
Though neither eyes nor ears, to
hear nor see,
Yet should I be in love by touching
thee."
"Say, that the sense of feeling
were bereft me,
And that I could not see nor hear,
nor touch,
And nothing but the very smell
were left me,
Yet would my love to thee be still
as much;

Beloved seemed an age.[1] So it is told of Sumantra, the minister of Daṣaratha, that after he took leave of Râma (son of Daṣaratha, decreed to spend 14 years in the forests) he stopped—on his return-journey to Ayodhya—one day with Guha, Râma's holy friend. But that one day appeared to him an interminable succession of days as he confessed to Daṣaratha :—

" As the two princes parted thence
I raised my hands in reverence,
Mounted my ready car, and bore
The grief that stung me to the core.
With Guha *many* days I stayed." [Râmâyaṇa ii-59-3].

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. III. p. 1403. Mudiyâne " iii-8-1].

TOPIC 51.

Pride—the foe of holiness.

Self-esteem, vanity, intumescence of learning and such,

For from the still'tory of thy face excelling
Comes breath perfum'd, that breedeth love by smelling."

" But, O, What banquet wert thou to the taste,
Being nurse and feeder of the other four :
Would they not wish the feast might ever last,
And bid Suspicion double-lock the door,
Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,,
Should, by his stealing in, disturb the feast."

1. (*a*) Lord Krishṇa suddenly disappeared from His beloved Gopîs. In the intensity of their woe they bewailed thus :—

"When thou in day to woods goest
Each moment's absence is an age ;
When Thou with rad'ant face comest—
O Face ! jewell'd with curly locks !—
With eyes unclosed we'd gaze at Thee,
But fool Brahma has eyelids made !"

[Bhâg : Pur : x-31-15]

(*b*) Cf : " Then tell me why these ages of delay ?
Oh love, all excellent, once more appear ;
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night these floods of fear ! "

[Madame Guyon.]

mark those men, in whom there is little of divinity, much less reverence for Divine saints. Karikkâl Ṣôzhabramha-râya, who lived in the country called Kal-brahma-deṣa, showed to Nañjîyar the composition by him of a commentary on Draviḍopanishad (=Tiruvâimozhi). Nañjîyar, out of regard for benefits received from this Râya, called his disciple Nambiḷḷai and asked him to deign to give the work a perusal. He did so and for compliment's sake remarked to the Râya:—"How well hast thou understood the heart of St. Nammâzhvâr, and how closely hast thou followed in his track"!

Râya: "Ah, Piḷḷai! hast thou not discerned any difference between the Saint and myself? Look, in the midst of multifarious duties, my position demands of me to fulfil, I have been able (with my superior talents) to execute this also!"[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. III. p. 1460, "Uḷan-âka" iii-9-2].

1. Cf (*a*) "A little learning is a dangerous thing
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring." *Pope.*

(*b*) "Be not captivated, My son, by the subtility and elegance of human compositions; for "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." [Imit: Christ, Thomas à Kempis. Bk iii-Ch: xxxiii].

(*c*) "Jnâna-lava-durvidagdham Brahmâpi naram na rañjayati" [Bhartṛihari.]

(*d*) When two persons of extraordinary learning and abilities presented themselves before St. Vincent de Paul, he gave them both a repulse, telling them: "Your abilities raise you above our low state. Your talents may be of good service in some other place. As for us, our highest ambition is to instruct the ignorant &c." He laid it down as a rule of humility that if possible a man ought never to speak of himself or his own concerns, such discourse usually proceeding from, and nourishing in the heart, pride and self-love. This indeed is a rule prescribed by Confucius, Aristotle, Cato, Pliny, and other philosophers; because, say they, for any one to boast of himself is always the most intolerable and barefaced pride, and modesty in such discourse will be suspected of secret vanity. Egotism or the itch of speaking always of a man's self shows he is intoxicated with the poison of self-love, refers everything to himself, and is his own centre, than which scarce anything can be more odious and offensive to others." [P. 303, Vol, VII. Butler's Lives of Saints.]

TOPIC 52.

The prodigality of God's bounty.

The bounty of God will be worthy of His Infinite Self[1]. This is illustrated by the following incident in the History of Lord Râma:—Before going into the forest, the Lord made great gifts. He stood alone like a poor man after having surrendered the throne and the royal elephant Ṣatruñjâya, when a poor Brâhman, Trijata by name, came up running :—

" O Râma, poor and weak am I,
And many children round me cry.
Scant living in the woods I earn :
On me thine eye of pity turn ?

And Râma said .—

" The cows on thee will I bestow
As far as thou thy staff canst throw
* * * *
These thousand kine, but not alone ;
Their herdsmen too, are all thine own.
And wealth beside I give thee : speak,
Thine shall be all thy heart can seek."

[Râmâyaṇa : ii-32].

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. III. p. 1478, " Ṣérum," iii-9-7.]

1. Read Lecture I: " The Love of God in creation," by Frederick Canon Oakeley, M.A. From Lecture II: " The Ways of God in Creation" the following beautiful extract is made :— * * * another characteristic of the gifts of the Creator; I mean their profusion. Munificence is eminently one of the qualities by which they are distinguished. By a munificent giver we mean one who does not measure his gifts by the strict necessities or those who are the recipients of his bounty, but gives them enough and to spare. In this respect he may be said to reverse the proverbial rule of human prudence by being geneous before he is just. He is willing to encounter the charge of prodigallty rather than to incur the risk of parsimony. He is not inquisitive or critical as to the use of his bounty, nor over-studious

TOPIC 53.

Vicarious expiation.

One day the washerman of the holy men of Ṣrîrangam brought clothes, particularly well washed that day, to Râmânuja. He was so rejoiced at the loving care bestowed by the washerman that he led him by his own hands to the presence of God Ranganâtha, and addressed Him thus:—"So well fitting thy August Self, has this washerman prepared the clothes for Thee! Prithee, deign to accept and wear them"; on which Ranganâtha condescended to Râmânuja, and said:—"For the loving service of this washerman, I have condoned the offence of the "washerman of the Krishṇâvatâra."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV. p. 1648, Kaṇṇi" iv-3-5].

about a waste which involves no blame and entails no injury. * * * * In His gifts is neither sadness nor constraint. They are not merely abundant but exuberant. Their number far exceeds, not only the necessities of the recipient, but even his power of using them. They are multiplied, as it should seem, chiefly in order to indicate the profuse generosity as well as the boundless resources of the Giver."

St. Fr: de Sales in his Treatise on the Love of God (Ch xv. Bk: p: 37) says· "As satisfaction is a consequence of happiness, it follows from this principle that the Almighty takes more pleasure in dispensing to us the effects of his bounty, than we can feel in receiving them."

"Nurses sometimes have so great an abundance of milk, that for their own relief they are obliged to seek some child to deprive them of it. Though the infant, pressed by hunger, partakes of it with avidity, the nurse is more anxious to impart her nourishment than the child to receive it."

Cf: Bhattârya's:

ऐश्वर्यमक्षरगतिंपरमंपदंवाकस्मैचिदांजलिभरंवहतेवितीर्य
अस्मैनाकिंचिदुचितंकृतमित्यथांबत्वंलज्जसेकथयकोयमुदारभावः॥

[Verse 58, Ṣrî-guṇa-ratna-koṣa].

1. Both Krishṇa and Balarâma,-the brothers,-loitered through the streets of Madhura on their way to meet king Kamsa. They saw the royal washerman coming, and begged him to lend them both fitting apparel (to appear becoming before Kamsa). But he was puffed up with

TOPIC 54.

Overwhelming Divine ecstasy jeopardizing existence.

It is said that deluged with Divine love, and therefore not able to swim in its ocean, St. Nammâzhvâr felt as if his very individual being was dissolved. A mother and her son once lived together in dire poverty. The son was a man of parts so that on one occasion a munificent gift—of the kind called *Ubhaya-mukhî-go-dâna*[1]—fell to his lot, and he brought home abundance of riches. The mother on seeing it, was so overcome with elation of joy that she died instantly.[2]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1669, "Maṇṇai" iv-4-1].

TOPIC 55.

God everywhere to the seeing Saint (1st Illustration.)

To St. Nammâzhvâr, divine consciousness had so much

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the pride of being the King's favorite, and had the effrontery to give his tongue a free license to heap reproaches on the Divine brothers. The affront irritated Krishṇa, who administered the vile creature a hard slap and knocked his head down to roll in the dust. [see *Vishnu*: Pur: *V-19-14 to 16*]. 'The sins of one man are remitted by the services of another made acceptable by an interceder is the great principle here illustrated. In other words, God's grace operates freely by the law of vicarious redemption, and atonement.

Cf. (*a*) "For, as by the disobedience of one man many sinned; so, by the obedience of one, many were justified" [Rom. V. 19.]

(*b*) Also read [Ibid V: 15 to 19.]

(*c*) Read Genesis XVIII-23 to 32 'I beseech thee, saith he (Abraham), be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more: what if ten should be found there (Sodom)? And he (Lord) said: I will not destroy it for the sake of ten (good men).'

1. Literally "Opposite-Faced cow-gift." This means the gift of a cow made when it is but half-delivered of calf. Unless this gift is accompanied with a large sum of money no one accepts it. To accept is to accept the sins of the giver.

2. Love "is strong as death" [Canticles, viii. 6].

"Divine love is sometimes so violent that it actually separates the soul from the body."

[Ch, IX Bk. VII. St. Fr de Sale's Love of God].

developed as that every external object and event appeared to him as replete (or infilled) with Divinity.[1] It is related of St. Nâthamuni, that when he saw the King of the land mounting his elephant by planting one foot on the head of a tributary prince of his, he exclaimed :—" Like this, is n't it, my Universal Sovereign rides His vehicle Garuda[2] by planting His foot on such world-lords as Brahmâ (the demiurge) and others ? "

On another occasion, the King of the land with his retinue passed by St. Nâthamuni's place on his way to Gaṇgai konda-Ṣozha-puram. Nâthamunigal was at the time engaged in worshipping God Mannanâr of Vîrâṇam. His daughter ran in and said :—

" Father, ! I saw a monkey, and two men with bows and a maiden enter our house."

The saint imagined the monkey to be Hanumân (the famed author of the Aindra-grammar, and messenger of Râma), the two men to be Râma and Lakshmana, the maiden to be Sîta, and proceeded in haste to see them. Those in the way saying " there, there, they go ", the saint pursued in the

1. Cf. (*a*) " The Hindus...believe (and their Saints realise) " God to reside and to act as an invisible power in the visible things, like our soul in our body." [P: 24 Rev: L Meurin's Lectures, Bombay]

(*b*) The theory of gravitation was not occularly verified till the Telescope was improved. The scientific *method, i e,* the *law* of evidence, is the same here too, *i e*; in the Science of divinity also Only the *apparatus for verification* is different: It is not a particular kind and adjustment of lenses, but a particular kind of mental clearness, called Ṣânti [=Peace. Gî xii-12] and a certain intensification of Holy Desire–called Parama-bhakti [Gî: xviii-54,55]. Atheist Hiranya-Kasipu contemptuousiy enquired saying:—

"Show me where God is ?" Saint Prahlada or the supremly Blest of God answered him saying :—show me where God is not ? "

[Letter of Yogi Pârthasârathi, d. 15-7-1900. Lucknow]

2. The same as Kerub or Cherub. For esoteric meaning, consult Nârâyaṇiengâr's Indo-Aryan Mythology.

direction, and came to the outer door, and asked the keepers there whether they did not see such a group as he imagined. When they said "no", he fell down and breathed his last.[1]

[Bhag: Vish, Bk. IV. 1706, "Tiruvuḍai" iv-4-8].

TOPIC 56.

God everywhere to seeing saints (2nd Illustration.)

Râmânuja was one day begging his alms (as became ascetics of his order) [2] in the thoroughfare of Ṣrîrangam. Boys drew some figures on the floor with their toes, and pointing to them, cried to Râmânuja: "Here is your God's image." Forthwith he put his bowl down, prostrated and went his way.

TOPIC 57.

God everywhere to seeing saints (3rd Illustration.)

Nañjîyar used to relate of Râmânuja that on one of the

1. Cf: Bhag: Gi: x·41. Lord Krishna saying:—

"For wheresoe'er is wondrous work, and majesty, and might, From me hath all proceeded. Receive thou this aright!"

At the mere mention of Hari, Chaitanya fell into ecstasy, see Lord Gauranga by Ṣiṣir Kumâr Ghose.

The passion of St John the Cross was so great that "the very name of the sufferings of Christ or sight of a crucifix, threw him into raptures of sweet love, and made him melt in tears," [Vol xi, p 490. Butler's Lives of the Saints]

See Topics Nos. 56 & 57 (the acts of Râmânuja). Bh: G:' vii-19, tells us that "such saints are rare to whom God is all."

2. Cf. (a) St. Francis Assisi said:—"This I ask for me and mine that for the glory of thy Holy Name we never possess anything under heaven, and receive our subsistence itself from the charity of others."

[Butler's Lives of Saints, p: 139 vol. x].

(b) "If we receive nothing for our work, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, the begging alms from door to door." [Ibid: p: 141]

days of his begging excursions, he came across a number of boys. They were imitating on the ground all that the Elders did in the Great Temple of Ranganâtha. They had drawn the Temple, the separate chambers therein allotted for God, and His Consort (Lakshmî), and the ceremony of the worship had progressed till it came to the offerings of food. The boys gathered handsful of sand for the purpose, and after going through the formality of offering it to the Gods, presented it to Râmânuja for acceptance as holy food. He at once prostrated on the ground and received the offered food in his bowl.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. p. 1299, 1st Tiruvandâdi. 44].

TOPIC 58.

God everywhere to seeing saints (4th Illustration.)

In the town called Râjendra-ṣozhan, a saint by name Tiruv-âyk-kulattâzhvâr lived. Once in the rainy season he left his house to go and inspect his crops. On the way he sighted the clouds above, which put him in mind of the cloud-colored Deity Vishṇu, so much so that he was seized with extatic trance and he fell down. One of the cultivators [the land-tenants] of the saint who was watching, ran up, lifted him up gently and brought him back home; and reproached the inmates for having allowed a saint of his tender temperament to go out for field-inspection in the rainy season.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. iv, 1710. "Maṇṇai" iv-4-9].

1. It is related of Embâr Swâmi *alias* Madhuramangalam Jîyar, who lived (about 1885) in Ṣrî-perumbûdûr–the birth place of Râmânuja–that as he reached the top of the hill of Nrisimhasvâmi at Melkota (*alias* Tiru-Nârâyaṇa Puram) he espied the imprints of feet and hands (made by boys) on a wall. He thereon taking them for so many impressions of God's hands and feet touched them reverently with his garment, pressed them to his eyes and prostrated.

TOPIC 59.

What constitute Fitness and Unfitness to praise God.

"I wish to hymn Thee in fitting terms" :—said St. Nâm-mâzhvâr. Some one asked :—"How is this consistent with the Saint's confession in another place that, "to praise Him, no fitting terms could be found ?". This objection is met by the following narrative :—A holy man living in Tirupati casually let fall, in the course of conversation with Tiruvêṅgadam-udaiyân (God Resident) that St. Tirumangaiy-âzvâr's Hymnal treating of Him [see Periya-Tirumozhi, 24-10] was but a show made as if belauding Him, whereas it was full of self-adulation, [inasmuch as each verse ended by a praise of the author who chanted the hymnal]. To this God replied : "But art thou not aware that *before* He declared his loyalty to Me, there was no self-adulation, but only *after* his allegiance to Me. *After* allegiance, all self-adulation acquires the virtue of praise offered to Myself ! ." The gist of this is that God cannot be praised by uninspired men, but when inspired by God Himself, they become the most worthy instruments to praise Him.*

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. iv, p. 1760, "Kariya" iv-5-6].

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* *Cf:* (*a*) Yâmunâchârya's Hymn, verse 8 :—

यद्वाश्रमावधियथामतिवाप्यशक्तः
स्तौम्येवमेवखलुतेऽपिसदास्तुवन्तः ।
वेदाश्चतुर्मुखमुखाश्चमहार्णवान्तः
कोमज्जतोरणुकुलाचलयोर्विशेषः ॥

(*b*) 'Oh we can but bring our drop to this Sea, and our candle, dim and dark as it is, to this clear and lightsome Sun of heaven and earth' [P. 214 Rev. S Rutherford's Select Letters.]

(*c*) Cp. *Amiel's Journal* P. 239:—"I feel most strongly that man, in all that he does or can do which is beautiful, great, or good, is but the organ and the which of something or some one higher than himself. This feeling is religion. The religious man takes part with a tremor

TOPIC 60.

The days and nights of the soul or vicissitudes in Spiritual Life.

The vicissitudes experienced by St. Nâmmâzhvâr in the spiritual life, are characterized on the one hand by an exaltation of spirit, and overflow of emotion in which his very life seems melted and lost; and characterized on the other hand by a desolation of spirit and aridity of heart abysmal in depth. These alternations, the former conspicuous when God is present, and the latter conspicuous when he is away—constitute the chief feature of the Saint's Tiruvâimozhi Hymnal, Decad, iv-6 [Tîrpârai].[1] Otherwise, between the one and the other, no

of sacred joy in these phenomena of which he is the intermediary but not the source, of which he is the scene, but not the author, or rather, the poet. He lends them voice, hand, will, and help, but he is respectfully careful to efface himself, that he may alter as little as possible the higher work of the Genius who is making a momentary use of him.

1. Cf. (a) When love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is opened in the soul;
When love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her and no fears control"

(b) "Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief and now of joy,"

(c) 'This vicissitude of day and night in the spiritual life is neither new nor unexpected to those that are acquainted with the ways of God; for the ancient prophets and the most eminent saints have all experienced an alternative of visitation and desertion. As an instance of this, the royal prophet describes his own case. "When I was in prosperity" says he, "and my heart was filled with the treasures of grace, I said I shall never be moved. But these treasures being soon taken away, and feeling in himself the poverty of fallen nature he adds: "Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled." Yet in this disconsolate state he does not despair, but with more ardour raises his desire and prayer to God: "Unto Thee O Lord, will I cry, and I will make my supplication unto my God." [Thos: à Kempis Imit: Chr: p: 249 Bk II-9].

(d) 'In Chirst's absence I confess, the work lieth behind; but if ye mean absence of comfort and absence of sense of His sweet presence, I think that absence is Christ's trying of us, not simply our sin against Him." [P: 170-1 Rev: S. Rutherford's Select Letters].

coherency in the shape of continuity of a theme is predicable "This polarity in love is emphatically discernible between Decad: iv. 5 [Vîṛṛu], and Decad: iv-6 [Tîrpârai]", said Bhattar; "but if a more consistent kind of link between the two sections be still demanded of me, I must only refer you to the case of rice and curds. For a certain customer brought a measure of rice to a hotel and asked the bar-maid to cook it for him. She got it ready, called him and spread the leaf for him to eat. He sat down with a vessel full of curds by his side. Rice was served. He poured curds over it:—"Two much curds, more rice please," he cried. She brought some. He poured curds. "Too much curds, rice please", he again cried. And this went on until mine-host was tired of serving him and she saucily remarked:—"Thy curds seem never ending. Is it possible I have rice enough to meet thy demand?" ["So I cannot every time satisfy demands made for establishing links between the satiate and the disconsolate states of the Saint" said Bhattar].

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV. p. 1784, "Tîrpârai,, iv-6-1].

TOPIC 61.

The one God Supreme above all others.

Before the One God, all lesser gods crouch and tremble.[1] This fact was exemplified in the days of Piḷḷaiy-urangâvilli

(e) "The religions state is one of deep enthusiasm, of moved contemplation, of tranquil ecstasy. But how rare a state it is for us poor creatures harassed by duty, by necessity, by the wicked world, by sin, by illness!"

[P. 240, *Amiel's Journal*].

1 Cf: (a) [Tait: Up Ânandavalli ii-8-1:] "*Bhîshâsmâd &c*"="From fear of Him, blows the wind; From fear of Him rises the sun:, from fear of Him, act Agni and Indra; and Death itself runs away from Him in fear."

(b) Also read Kenopanishad. iii: for the Power of the one God styled "Yaksham" over other Powers of the Kosmos.

Dâsar. One of his land-tenants was put into tortures by the village deity called Aiyanâr. The deity was asked to mention what measures would serve to propitiate it and appease its wrath. It said :—" I want milk and fruits, I must be smeared with scented sandal; I must be nicely dressed, and nicely decked with jewels ; I must ride in a litter ; and umbrellas must be held over me." The villagers consented and going to the house of their master the Dâsar, borrowed all the things mentioned, and did to the deity as directed, and retired, after the propitiation-ceremonies, to rest. That night however the torments of the obsessed tenant were redoubled. Aiyanâr was questioned as to the why of this again. It gave out :—" Ye have brought me the articles used by Dâsar ; ye have placed me under *his* umbrella. How can I go under *it* ? Ye have exposed me as it were to the sun ; ye have smeared fire over my body, by smearing me with *his* sandal-paste ; ye have hung heavy irons over my shoulders by decking me with *his* ornaments ; for what ye have done, I shall not depart before taking this man's life " ; and thus the deity multiplied its tortures. [Dâsar is believer in the one Supreme God ; hence the pre-eminence of himself and his belongings over the so-called gods of inferior types.] [1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. IV. p. 1809, " Tiṣaikkinra ". iv-6-2].

TOPIC 62.

The efficacy of God's Holy Name alone, the Sovereign Remedy for all ills.

As a cure for those who are stricken with agony by the withdrawal of God's Fellowship, no quacks' nostrum is efficacious, such as invoking inferior deities,—deities who like vampires ask for vile things, such as flesh and liquor being

1. Read pp. 67-68, Max Muller's Six Systems.

offered as propitiation[1]—; the only sovereign salve for God-sick souls is God Himself, and calling on His Holy Names. A story goes of a man who used to be afflicted with liver-complaints. He sought the physician for a remedy. " For forty days live on milk-diet " the physician prescribed. Being poor, he hit upon a device. Happening to be the neighbour of a dairy-form, he daily visited the spot where pots-full of milk were kept, and devoutly prostrated to the same. This cured him. [This is to show that the lawful use of the Holy Name of God, in reverence and love, is a panacea for all ills][2]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. IV p. 1835, " Ivaḷai " iv-6-5]

TOPIC 63.

The dust of the feet of God's Holy Saints even more efficacious.

Even more efficacious than the Holy Name of God is the

1. "What multitudes of men, women, children, oxen, sheep, goats and other animals, have even the more enlightened Romans sacrificed upon their abominable altars! The finest horses, harts, hags, lambs, and bulls were respectively devoted, upon every trifling occasion to Apollo, Diana, Ceres, Proserpine, and Neptune; for each deity had its peculiar offering. It was a system not less injurious to the common interest than it was disgraceful to the feelings of humanity.' [P: 273, Ch: vii. " Religious Melancholy, by Burton."]

2. (*a*) Among the Âryans the Holy Name of God is woven into a *mantram*, the latter term meaning that which saves those who devoutly repeat it. It ought not to be imparted to the undeserving, and ought not to be made use of lightly. The heart must be contrite and humble and full of faith and confidence. A Chirstian Author, F. C. Oakeley M. A. in his " Voice of Creation " p: 79, writes thus:—" The reverence due to God and all that belongs to Him forbids the unguarded use of His Awful Name except in companies where it is sure to be treated with honour, or in places where it is protected from disrespect by the circumstances and associations under which it is employed. This method of dealing with holy things is what our Blessed Lord recommends in telling us not to cast our pearls before those who will trample on them." Thus our Holy Mantras are called Rahasyas or Secrets.

[(*b*) & (*c*): see P: 75].

Holy dust of the feet of His saints, to remove contamination from inferior deities. Once it happened thus:—Vanḍar and Ṣonḍar were two devout followers of Râmânuja. Akaḷaṅka-nâtt-âzhvân the Prince, (probably to have a joke with them, or to test their faith) showed them a Jaina-temple, and said:—"Here is your Holy court-yard; here your Lion (sign of Vishṇu Temple), fall down and worship." They believed him and reverently did as told. And then they came to know they were duped, as the temple where they worshipped was a Jaina-temple (= antagonistic to Vaishṇavism). The shock from this revelation made them faint. Piḷḷaiy-uraṅgâ-villi-dâsar, the intimate disciple of Râmânuja, proceeded to the spot, and sprinkled them with the dust of his feet. They revived and rose.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV. p. 1889, "Taṇiyum" iv-6-6].

(*b*) Queen Draupadi exclaimed thus:—

शंखचक्रगदापाणे द्वारकानिलयाच्युत ।
गोविन्दपुण्डरीकाक्ष रक्षमांशरणागतां ॥

[Maha-Bhà: Udyoga: 66–43.]

रागादिदोषान्सततानुरक्तान्
अशेषकायप्रसृतानशेषान् ।
औत्सुक्यमोहारातिदान्जघान
यःपूर्ववैद्यायनमोस्तुतस्मै ॥

[Âyurveda.]

(*c*) The Royal Saint Kulaṣekhara's Mukundamàla, verse 17 runs thus:—

हेलोकाःश्रुणुतप्रसूतिमरणव्याधेश्चिकित्सामिमां
योगज्ञास्समुदाहरन्तिमुनयोयांयाज्ञवल्क्यादयः ।
अन्तर्ज्योतिरमेयमेकममृतं कृष्णाख्यमापीयतां
तत्पीतंपरमौषधंवितनुतेनिर्वाणमात्यन्तिकम् ॥

[(*d*). See P: 75].

TOPIC 64.

The efficacy of Holy Men's Foot-dust.

Moreover the said dust is also efficacious in healing the God-sick souls.[1] The following conversation took place on this theme:—Once on an occasion, Nañjîyar and his disciples were assembled together in an enclosure near the Holy Pavilion in the compound of the Temple of Lord Ranganâtha; and the theme, of St. Nammâzhvâr prescribing the Dust of saints' feet as cure for the God-afflicted, came to be discussed. Nambiḷḷai, the Chief Disciple asked:—" Is n't the Cause Itself the Cure also for the God-sick? for the Cause for producing distress, was mentioned to be the Holy Charioteer, Lord Krishṇa Himself [i.e., distress consequent on His absence]. To relieve this then, is not He Himself the Sovereign Salve? While so, He is mentioned as the Cause of the malady, but the Dust of the saints is prescribed as its cure! Can the cause then be one, and the cure another"?

Replied Nambiḷḷai:—" Hear me. When people are in fits (=delirious of God)[2], we cannot give them butter-milk (=antidote) at once to drink; but must first apply to their nostrils ginger-powder. Besides, when butter-milk is asked for, and it

(d) Cp. 'Jesus Christ, the great Physician of value, the only Sovereign Physician of the soul, who by his blood and spirit cures all our spiritual sicknesses.'

[Cruden's Concordance under 'Physician.']

1. (a) The very touch, the very sight, the very hem of the garment, the very shadow and other relics of holy men, have been recorded as thus efficacious. Read the lives of Râmânuja, of Jesus, and of the holy saints of every land.

(b) Cp: Harivamṣa Ch: cccv-30: धारयिष्याम्यहंपांसुं ॥

2. St. Fr: de Sales tells us [Bk: vii, Ch: x. p: 278. on Love of God]: —" There are persons, who by yielding without reserve to the influence of Divine Love, augment its ardour to such a degree, that in the end it entirely consumes them. These ardent lovers of the Almighty are like persons enduring some weighty affliction; the excess of grief sometimes deprives them for so long a time of food and sleep, that they are reduced to extreme debility, which soon leads to death'"

is not readily forthcoming, we must resort to such other remedies as are ready to hand. Thus, when Lord Krishṇa (butter-milk) is longed after, and He cannot be produced at once, we have to adopt preliminary measures, such as that of sprinkling Holy mens' Dust (ginger-dust); and when the patient recovers his breath somewhat, then only may the sovereign Remedy —the vision Beatific of Lord Kṛishṇa—be presented to him."

[Bhag: Vish, Bk. IV. p. 1839, "Taṇiyum" iv-6-6].

TOPIC 65.

Love of God unto death.

It is now shown that if saintly men be not admitted as *immediate* Saviours,—as illustrated above by the curative power of their Holy foot-dust—they are at least efficient functionaries for performing mediatorial offices between souls and God. In other words, they do possess the power of vicarious pleading with God, and procure for souls their redemption. There lived a saint by name Tiruk-kaṇṇa-maṅgaiy-âṇḍân remarkable for his ardent love of God, and who worshipped at the Adorable Shrine of Lord Pattarâvi (= The life of lovers). He was so far risen in holiness as to put entire trust and confidence in God, so much so that he entirely abandoned his soul unto His keeping, and ceased from every activity which may savour of trust in self, and of distrust in God. He laid himself down at the door of the Sanctuary of the Lord prepared to die for Him, and thus exemplify his whole-hearted love and trust in Him! [1] His disciple ran to him and weeping, prayed to him

1. Cp. (*a*) "Thy *love*, O God, is *strong as death*" (Canticles, viii-6). Says St. Fr: de Sales in his 'Love of God' [Bk: vii; Ch: ix, p: 275]:— "* * * divine love is sometimes so violent, that it actually separates the soul from the body, and by causing the death of those who love, it renders them infinitely happier than if it bestowed on them a thousand lives."

[*Continued on page 78*].

thus:—"God-Sire! after thy departure, what hope is there for me?" The master consoled him thus:—"Son! remain by my side, that is enough for thee." The disciple carried out this command to the very letter and expiring even before the master, mounted to the abode of the Blessed. Three days after, the Master winged his flight to the regions of glory. [The disciple's incident also illustrating that the mere act of acceptance of a disciple by his godly master secures a passport to Heaven].[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Vol. IV. p. 1844, "Vedam" iv-6-8].

TOPIC 66.

Martyrdom.

Kûrattâzhvar, the immediate disciple and lover of Râmânuja, was a martyr to the Cause of Vaishṇavism. Krimikantha-Chôḷa, the reigning prince at the time of the Choḷa-Kingdom was a bigotted Ṣaiva. Like Mahomet's followers converting people by their sword, he had undertaken a crusade

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" As the lot of the reprobate is to die in sin, that of the elect is to expire in the love and grace of God, which is effected in several ways."

(b) [Thomas á Kempis, Imit: Chr: p: 109]:—" Blessed is the man who continually anticipates the hour of his death [vide Bh: Gî: xiii-8:—"*janma &c.*"] and keeps himself in continual preparation for its approach."

(c) "The Prepared and Ready ever welcome Death as their most endearing host" is the translation of "*kritakrityâh pratîkshante mrityum priyam iv-âtithim.*"

(d) 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him' [Job: xiii. 15]. 'Faith's eyes, that can see through a millstone, can see through a gloom of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace.' [P. 220. Rev: S. Rutherford's Select Letters].

(e) St. Yâmunâchârya sang:—

रुषानिरस्तोऽपिशिशुस्तनन्धयो ।
नजातुमातुश्चरणौजिहासति ॥

[V: 26. Stotra-Ratna].

1. For corroborative texts in the Bible, of this truth, see *Exod* xxxii-11-14; *Kings* viii-8-10; Job xlii-7.8; Rom. xv-30; Eph. vi-18-19; 1 Thess v-25; Heb-xiii-18; James-v-16.

of religious persecution, in the course of which he forcibly compelled every one to sign a bull he had proclaimed, to the effect that there was no other God but Ṣiva. Âzhvân was one of those so forced. In court, he was ordered to sign the declaration. He stoutly refused. Thereon the king ordered his eyes being plucked out. When, Âzhvân himself plucked them out, exclaiming:—"These eyes, evil after having seen thee, shall not be."[1] Râmânuja's heart bled at this catastrophe, and from that moment sorely longed for restoration of his eye-sight. The blinded Âzhvân (like Milton) composed at this time the famous Hymnal known as the Varada-râja-stava (or Psalms in honor of Lord Varada-râja, Resident in Kânhcîpuram). On hearing one verse out of this (viz., verse 23, beginning: "nîla megha &c.," [2]) Râmânuja was so rejoiced that he exclaimed;—"Âzhvân! I cannot bear to see thee so distressed, being deprived of eyesight. It matters not now if by pressing on God our petition, we transgress the law of utter resignation and submission to His will. If *thou* dost not care to urge thy will against God's, at least I conjure thee to do so for *my* sake. Prithee, go to Lord Varada and sing to Him." Âzhvân carried out his Master's behest and returned.

1. Cp: St: Ignatius's (Bishop of Antioch A. D. 107) conduct before the tyrant Trajan:—Trajan asked:—"Do not we seem to thee to bear the Gods in our breasts, whom we have assisting us against our enemies?". Ignatius replied:—"You err in calling those gods who are no better than devils, for there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them" (=a *part* of the meaning contained in the Holy Name Nârâyaṇa) [Butler's Lives of Saints, Vol II, p: 13].

2. नीलमेघनिभमंजनपुंज
श्यामकुन्तळमनन्तशयंत्वां ।
अब्जपाणिपदमम्बुजनेत्रं
नेत्रसात्कुरुकरीशसदामे ॥

Has He deigned to favour thee (i.e., grant thee eyes)?" asked Râmânuja. "No", answered Kûranâtha.

"But did you hymn Lord Varada with the motive needed?"

"Sire, yes", (concealing his *motivelessness*, out of respect ofr his master's injunction to hymn *with the motive* of regaining the lost eye-sight)

"Recite one verse then out of those Hymns, pray."

Âzhvân recited verse 22, beginning: "Tvâm-udâra" &c.,[1]

Râmânuja was so delighted with its sweetness and meaning, that he exclaimed :—

"How could not have God condescended to thee, after listening to such ravishing music of thy hymn? Âzhvân! turn to me, let me scan thy face."

[Râmânuja's anxious care for Âzhvân's welfare had provoked in him certain conviction that his disciple *had* obtained eye-sight from the All-Merciful. Hence his scanning].

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV p. 1887: "Nôkki": iv-7-6].

TOPIC 67.

Grateful submission to spiritual Discipline.

Once, in the holy monastery of Râmânuja, an entertainment was being given to the devotees of the place. Âcchân (Kidâmbi-âcchân), the disciple of Râmânuja, served at the entertainment, during the course of which, Râmânuja noticed

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1. त्वामुदारभुजमुन्नसमायत्
कर्णपाशपरिकर्मसदंसं ।
आयताक्षमभिजातकपोलं
पारणीयति वरप्रद दृङ्मे ॥

him serving drinking water standing sideways [a sort of indifferent attitude indicating want of sufficient respect for the guests]. He ran up to Âcchân, and striking him on the back, thundered out:—"Fool! Knowest thou not manners,—that thou servest not guests by facing them right in their front reverently?" Âcchân never felt injured, but at once exhibited feelings of gratitude for the master's correction, administered out of his abundance of love for him, and in delight thereon, recited St. Nammâzhvâr's verse:—

"O Lord! Thou hast vouchsafed to help
Me render all Divine Service;
Though humble I,
In service high!" [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1918, "Maṇimâmai" iv-8-2].

1. Cf: (*a*) "Do you think that God would have you offer victims and holocausts? No, he would rather have you obey his commands; because obedience is far better than victims, and it is better for you to comply with His will than to offer him the fat of rams" [Kings xv. 22].

(*b*) The Carthusian monks made no other vow than this:—"I promise obedience according to the rule."

(*c*) St: Paul was struck with a light from heaven, and seized with fear. [He cried, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me do?" [Acts ix-7.]

(*d*) The Centurion to Christ:—"I have soldiers under me, and I say to this, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to my servant, do this, and he does it." [Mat. viii. 9].

(*e*) St Ignatius used frequently to say that if his Holiness should command him to embrak in a vessel without mast, sail, oar, helm, or any other thing necessary for a voyage, he would unquestioningly obey him, not only without uneasiness or repugnance, but with grea interior satisfaction.

(*f*) "Obey your superiors, and be subject to them; for they watch continually, having to give account for your souls; and obey them so that they may discharge their duty with joy, not sorrow; for that would do you no good."

[Heb-xiii-17.]

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TOPIC 68.

What is not God's is no use being ours.

What if I can call my heart my own, if it be not the object of God's affection?" exclaimed St. Nammâzhvâr. To this Nañjîyar gave an example:—'The lover delayed coming; and therefore the mistress who had intended scented sandal for his service, broke the bottle which contained it, (for, what use is it without the lover?)' Thus the heart is a desirable possession when it can be of service to him alone; otherwise, it is fit to be thrown away.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1919, "Maṇi-mâmai" iv-8-2].

TOPIC 69.

Disinterested love to God.

The highest love to God is the love of charity, *i.e.*, love rendered to God for God's sake,—love, culminating in benediction or glorification of God. Love so disinterestedly rendered

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1. Cp (*a*) "Sîtâ to Anasûya: [Râmâyaṇa, ii-118]:—

'No marvel, best of dames, thy speech
The duties of a wife should teach:
Yet I, O lady, also know
Due reverence to my lord to show.
Were he the meanest of the base
Unhonoured with a single grace,
My husband still I ne'er would leave
But firm through all, to him would cleave."

(*b*) *Sîtâ*: (Ibid: v-26-5)

"Here for my lord I weep and sigh
And worn with woe would gladly die,
For what is life to me afar
From Râma of the mighty car."

[Madame Guyon's Lines]:—

(*c*) "The heart, that values less its ease
Than it adores Thy ways."

(*d*) "Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all."

(*e*) "'Tis but the love of self you see.
Fix all your love on God alone,
Choose but his will, and hate your own:"

[(*f*) See p: 83.]

is love of purity and virginity, which carries with it the highest fruit, viz., the possession of God. When that is secure, all other secondary fruits are of necessity implied therein.[1] This is illustrated by the story of Ṣâvitri,[2] a matchless example of chastity and fidelity to her Lord. Her parents had decided on a husband for her, when Ṛishi Nârada happened to come and told them that the intended bridegroom was not destined to live long. At this the parents were taken aback; but Ṣavitri insisted that she would not allow the purity of their first intention being sullied by their change of mind. "Him alone I would have for my mate," she beseeched, "give me to him, I stand surety for his life."[3] The parents could not resist her, and so oblated her to Satyavâṇ. As foretold by Nârada, the term of

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(*f*) Sage Âḷavandâr's The Song-gem. verse 57:--

ननेहंनप्राणान्नचसुखमशेषाभिलषितं
नचात्मानंनान्यत्किमपितवशेषत्वविभवात्
बहिर्भूतंनाथक्षणमपिसहेयातुशतधा ।
विनाशंतत्सत्यंमधुमथनविज्ञापनमिदं ॥

'Nor body, life, nor all the good the world
Can give, nor soul itself, do I desire,
If they to Thee do not as sole belong.
Not Thine, ?—I cannot bear for one instant;
Not Thine, ?—in hundred ways to ruin go.
I make my troth, Lord! what I say is truth."

1. All Vaishṇava saints' prayers are of this form. They asked for no blessings of God, but sought the God of blessings, blessed, praised and glorified Him. They sang as in Rig Veda Khila:—

यद्धिंतममदेवेश तदाज्ञापयमाधव।

2. The story of Sâvitri is related in the Mahâbhârata, and beautifully translated by Rückert, and epitomized by Mrs: Manning. A better resurrection than even Christ's! Also Cp, Queen Sîta's resurrection from fire.

3."Be he virtuous or worthless,—
many be his days or few,—
Once for all I choose my husband
to that choice will I be true."

[Mrs: Manning]

the youth's life came to an end, and Yama, the Lord of Death abstracted his life away. But Sâvitri followed Yama's emissaries and dogged them to the very threshold of his council-chamber. Yama, seeing her, grew wroth with his agents for bringing her, and turning to Sâvitri: "What dost thou want", cried he.

Sâvitri: "I want my husband."

Yama: "Anything except him, please beg."

Sâvitri: "Then let me have numerous offspring by him."

(Yama was thus bound by his own promise, and was constrained to grant her Satyavân. So, when God is acquired, all else is implied).

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1920. "Êrâḷum" iv-8-5].

TOPIC 70.

The tenderness of saints' hearts.

The compassionate hearts of saints deplore the fate of men who are turned away from God, and even blame God for not correcting them. Such compassion was once excited in the most tender heart of Kûratt-âzhvân, when, once as he was passing by the way, he saw a frog in the jaws of a snake, croaking most pitiously in death-agony. To what Being doth this frog send its plaintive wail? What Being will hear the agony and come to rescue?" He sighed thus and fainted.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Vol. IV, p. 1960-61. "Naṉṉâdâr" iv-9-1]

1. Cp (*a*) Madame Guyon's Lines:—

"A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!"

(*b*) Buddha's compassion did similarly find vent when he espied a decrepit old man by the way-side:—

TOPIC 71.

Charity in Saints' hearts.

Another story of the Queen of Mercy holding supreme sway in the heart of Kûrattâzhvân is also related. On the river-side of Kâveri (Ṣrîrangam) a woman had filled her pots with water, but there was no one near to help them to her head. Âzhvân noticing it at once helped her (forgetting his high caste, and her lowness).

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1960. "Naṇṇâdâr" iv-9-1]

TOPIC 72.

Morbid love of Lucre.

There are worldlings who are so much addicted to Lucre as even to consider their life not worth its purchase. A story is recounted of a man of this kind, who was accused of treason. His hands and legs were lopped off as a punishment. His friends came to condole with him in his dire misfortune. But he consoled them by saying:—"Congratulate me, friends! 'tis to your good wishes due, that I have with this much escaped! What would have been me, if instead of my hands and legs, they had demanded me to pay something from my dear money, which is of so much more value to me than my life?" St. Nammâzhvâr laments over such men for their ignorance in believing that, not God, but Lucre protects them!.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1971. "Ṣâmârum" iv-9-2].

"But lo! Siddhârta turned
Eyes gleaming with divine tears to the sky,
Eyes lit with heavenly pity to the earth:
* * * *
Perchance the Gods have need of help themselves,
Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
They cannot save!"
[Arnold's Light of Asia.]

1. Cp: Madame Guyon's Lines:—

(a) "Oh; the vain conceit of man
Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,

TOPIC 73.

Saints' laments cause no annoyance to God—or the music of perpetual prayer.

Saints incessantly think of God, speak of God, call on Him, prefer to him all the sorrows of their spirit &c. With such lovers—because they dun Him as it were—God is not offended. Şittâḷ-kkondâr gave the following illustration:—"The newt (wall-lizard) annoyingly tittle-tattles ever and anon. People therefore pay little attention to it. Not so however God, who on the other hand loves His Saints unceasingly tittle-tattling about Him "[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IV, p. 1977. "Kondâḍum" iv-9-3]

Though the Lord is good alone."

(b) "Learn, all earth! that feeble man,
Sprung from this terrestrial clod.
Nothing is, and nothing can;
Life and power are all in God."

(c) "That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against his empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below."

(d) अर्थानामार्जनेदु:खंआर्जितानांचरक्षणे ।
नाशेदु: खंव्रयेदु:खंाकिमर्थंद:खभाजनम् ॥

1. Cp: (a) Bh: Gi: ix-14:—

"Unendingly
They chant to Me; seek Me; keep their vows
Of reverence and love, with changeless faith
Adoring Me."

(b) Bh: Gi. xii-6 to 8:—

Night and day
Musing on Me—him will I swiftly lift
Forth from life's ocean of distress and death,
Whose soul clings fast to Me. Cling thou to Me!
Clasp Me with heart and mind! so shalt thou dwell
Surely with Me on high."

(c) Lord Kṛishṇa to Gopis:—"But do you know I have to listen to grumblings, every moment of my existence, and am not in the habit of enumerating my sorrows to others?" [P: xxxviii. Appendix, Vol II. Lord Gauranga by Shishir Kumâr Ghose.]

(d) "God—the great patient loving God, hears the huge sounding-board of space re-echo again and yet again with rough curses on His Name,—with groans and wailings

TOPIC 74.

The pride of the parvenu.

When insignificant man rises to fortune, he becomes vain, and demands respect and homage from all. He wishes to be aired about as "What a great man he (= *mudaliyâr*)!"[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1974. "Kondâttum" iv-9-8]

TOPIC 75.

Vile are the ways of the world.

"Oh, the ways of the world!" laments St. Nammâzhvâr. See by what unfair means do they hoard Lucre. A good man goes to live in a village. He thinks he ought to place himself under some one's protection that he may live in peace. He goes to the headman of the village and commends himself to his care. The headman seeing that he is a poor harmless soul, but having some money, begins by frightening him thus: "I say my good man! I find people hereabouts whispering to themselves about thee; they suspect thee, they may harm thee."

---

shouts, tears, laughters and shuddering discord through His everlasting vastness, but amid it all there is a steady strain of music,—full, sweet and pure—the music of perpetual Prayer? No science of Prayer? Such science there is that by its power the very ether parts asunder as by a lightning stroke—the highest gold gateways are unbarred,—and the connecting link 'twixt God and man stretch itself through space, between and round all worlds, defying any force to break the current of its messages." [P. 159. Marie Correllis' Soul of Lilith].

1. A man by name Mutta took menial service under a gentleman, and during 4 or 5 years he served, he learnt all the master's concerns and secrets. He had observed the master burying money under the hearth as a safe hiding-place. The master happened to be absent, when Mutta the menial, quietly extracted the treasure. From that day forward, by degrees, he grew insolent. When his master called him "Mutta", "what?" he began "am I so contemptible? why can't you call me "Muthusâmi," sir?" Another time, master:—"Muthusâmi." "Is that all the title I deserve?" the menial yelled, "why can't you address me as "Muthusâmi Mudaliar?".

The poor man is put in dread and asks :—" Have I not trusted thee, Sir! all these days? What wilt thou have me do?" " Listen!" rejoins the headman, " if thou hast any money, keep it in my house; if thou hast any land, transfer it to my name. No ill can then be plotted against thee, for thou canst then freely declare thou hast nothing of thine own. In this manner, the good man is by the headman's artifice caught in a net. Not only this, he dodges the poor man, in addition, into executing a document in his favor for loan not actually paid, and interest is made to accumulate thereon. This, to silence the man if he should ever make bold to demand his money and land. Some time after, the headman contrives to despatch the poor dupe altogether, fearing that if he lives he may associate with other people and expose his infamy. Oh, the ways of the world! By what nefarious means do they stuff their stomachs !!." [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1985, " Marukki " iv-9-6]

TOPIC 76.

God Almighty alone can save us.

Piḷḷai-Tirunaraiyûr-Aṛaiyar said :—" No one is able to

1. Our holy teacher Sri Mâdhava-puram Ṣrinivâsâchârya embellished this by the following tale :— " There was a rich man, into whose favour a wily Vaiṣya insinuated himself, and obtained from him a loan of 4,000 Rupees. The rich man fell ill, and was on the point of dying. He could yet talk. He sent for the Vaiṣya, to get his money back; but on learning that he could still use his tongue sent word to say he would join him soon. In the meanwhile the rich man lost speech. The Vaiṣya was again sent for. Learning he had lost speech, he now readily came. The rich man, to friends gathered round him, showed his four fingers, directing them towards the Vaiṣya, as if to make them understand that the Vaiṣya owed him 4,000 Rupees, and to recover it for him. The astute Vaiṣya turned this dumb sign to his advantage, by addressing with (crocodile) tears in his eyes :— " Alas, friends! how I wish this intimate friend of mine had lived! See, he asks you to portion out 4000 Rs: to me out of his estate,—the first thing,—what he had himself intended to give me if he had lived. Note his dying request, pray; pay me and let his soul rest in peace ! "

disentangle the intricately woven bird's nest. When therefore the Almighty has woven a net about our soul, in due regard to the acts of every one of us, how can one with no back-bone in him, disentangle this net? Only *He* can do it when we clasp His Holy Feet".[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 1994 "Kâtti" iv-9-8]

TOPIC 77.

The co-operation of God's Free Grace and man's Free Will.

When St. Nammâzhvâr asked God why all men should not be saved by His Free Grace; "But man has free will, and I wait to sée its predilection for Me dawn," answered God. "But even that dilection in the free-will, thou cans't generate", [1] pressed the saint. The story of Ṛishi Udaṅka is recited to the effect that after the war of the Mahâbhârata terminated, and all the Kuru-race had been extinguished, he happened to meet Lord Kṛishṇa, and questioned:—

"What! As God, are not to Thee, Pâṇḍavas and Kauravas equally bonded as Thy creatures? How then didst thou take up sides with the former, and allow destruction of the latter?"

1, Cp: Bh: Gî: vii-14:—

"Hard it is
To pierce that veil divine of various shows
Which hideth Me; yet they who worship Me
Pierce it and pass beyond."

'Tyndall's marvellous conception of inanimate matter is contained in his expression: 'the form, potency and promise of life'; and Rev: Thomas Mitchell says: "Behold the marvellous types who in our day are called "advanced scientists," possessing the credulous belief in the evolution of all things from nature, but rejecting the prior *involution* of these things, which necessitates a creation, and this a Creator! All the manifestations of nature may unroll from her bosom, but they were never enrolled within her. They may be uncovered and come out of her, but they were never covered up or put into her. A thing may be taken out of another which did not have it within!!!" [*Key to Ghostism*, Introd. p: v

Lord :—" Did I not with eternal patience bear up against the sins of the Kurus ? Did I not use every possible means to restore peace between the cousins ? Withal, they persisted in their infernal determination that if their relatives, the Pâṇḍus lived and thrived, they would not live and thrive. It is *then*, is it not, that I permitted their destruction ?"

Udaṅka :—" But thou art Universal Ruler. Thou couldst have so contrived their wills as to be well-disposed, and so have secured peace ? "

Lord:—" But they have their free-will. I cannot coerce it, but must wait till of its own free-choice, a predilection (or dilection) for Me evolve from it." [1]

[Bhag : Vish : Vol. IV, p. 2007. " Onṛum " iv-10-1]

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1. For details of the Udaṅka (or Utaṅka) Episode, see Mahâbhârata, Aṣvamedha Parva, Ch : 53 ff. This is a difficult question for theology. The following extracts from St : Fr: de Sale's *Treatise on The Love of God* may help to elucidate it :—

" * * the same all-merciful Being ...desires to recall us to our origin, provided we have the happiness and wisdom not to flee from the arms of Infinite goodness and mercy [p : 45, Ch xviii. Bk. i]

" Though God designed, in creating them, to leave them a free-will, by which they might choose between good and evil, he also resolved to create them in original justice, that they might have reason to reproach themselves alone if they forfeited eternal glory." [p: 66, Ch : iv : Bk ii.]

" Yes, my God, thou art infinitely good ; thou only abandonest those who forsake thee thou wouldst never withdraw thy graces from us if we were not the first to flee from thee, and refuse thee the dominion of our hearts." [Pp. 72-73, Ch : x. Bk. ii].

" Naturalists mention a precious stone, whose brightness is tarnished if poison of any kind come in contact with it. So it is with the soul. No sooner has it consented to mortal sin, of whatever nature it may be, than it instantaneously loses, not only the treasure of grace, but likewise all its beauty and loveliness." [Pp. 140. Ch : iv. Bk iv].

" Destruction is *thy own*, Israel : thy help is only in *Me* " [Osee, xiii-9.]

Reflect also on the sense of :— "Ask and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you " [Matt : vii-7].

" The union of our soul with God is sometimes effected without our

TOPIC 78.

The Power of monotheistic Faith.

The most ignorant and illiterate woman in the holy fold of Râmânuja's faith, knows who is the one only God. For Tripurâ-Devi, the wife of Râja Akaḷankanâth-Âzhvât, would treat idols of all gods but the one God as no better than stones fit for the hearth (to cook over). Some asked this queen if her conviction was a result arrived at from the authority of Revelation. "Nothing of this kind, I am aware", she rejoined, "what my Saviour Râmânuja has settled for me is enough. If he should command me that I should worship the deity (Ṣiva) of the north-east point of the compass (Iṣânya) where our waste-water pots are kept, I should worship it.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 2009. "Onṛum" iv-10-1]

TOPIC 79.

Saints' power of salvation exceeds even that of God.

God's saints take upon themselves the burden of saving

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co-operating further than merely following simply, and without resistance, the divine goodness which attracts us with a view to union—as an infant which delights in reposing on its mother's bosom, but has not sufficient strength to seek it, is very glad when its parent takes it in her arms, and places it on her lap." [P. 255, Ch: ii, Bk. vii on love of God].

"As for those who remain buried in the sleep of sin, they have indeed just reason to sigh, groan, and weep: this is the greatest misfortune that could befal them; but they have contemned and rejected the light of grace; they have rendered themselves deaf to the voice of its inspirations; they have hardened their hearts against its attractions; therefore they (*like the Kurus*) are the sole authors of their own misery—the workers of their ruin and destruction." [P. 151. Ch. v. Bk iv *Ibid*].

Cp: Brahma Sûtra: *krita-prayatna &c*," and its elaborate comentaries on this question of Free Grace and Free-will by Râmânuja.

In Bhag: Vish: Vol. x, p: 4267. it is written:—"When the child cries, "Ma," God answers in the guise of mother in Mother's voice. When it cries "Pa," He answers in the guise of Father in Father's voice."

Read St: Augustine's "City of God" Ch: 6 to 9, Bk: xii.

men whom even God giveth up as hopelessly irretrievable. St. Nammâzhvâr ventured on such vocation. A question rose here as to whether God's saints possess such a virtue. To this the story of Uparicharavasu [1] is cited:—By a Rishi's curse this saint was consigned to the nether regions, the Pâtâḷa, and there he continued his Vaishṇava practices of devotion as inculcated in the Pâñcharâtra Scriptures. The demons of Pâtâḷa, seeing him belonging to the faction of the celestials (Devas), harassed him with their weapons. But as he was a devotee of Vishṇu, he proved invulnerable to them. The demons sought their chaplain Ṣukra, and asked him to suggest to them a way how to wound the devotee. Ṣukra said:—Begin by abstracting his love for Vishṇu." The demons then put on the disguises of Brâhmaṇas and insinuated to him that Vishṇu who had neglected him so far, even down to his confinement in the nether regions, could certainly not be worthy of his worship and so on. But all these attempts to rob his love for Vishṇu proved futile, but on the other hand they excited great compassion in his heart for the demons, at sight of the profundity of their sinfulness which suggested to them even to go to the extent of trying to deprive even saints of their love for God reigning in their hearts, and thereon supplicated Vishṇu to exhibit his mercy even unto these men. The saint's prayer had immediate effect. The demons turned friends, and were anon taken to Vishṇu's abode of bliss. Thus the power of salvation vested in God, manifests itself with redoubled vigour in the members of His Holy Church. [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 2008. 'Onṛum' iv-10-1].

1. For an account of this King, see Mahâbhârata, Ṣânti Parva, Moksha Dharma, Pp: 748 to 756 [Pratâp Chandra Roy's Edition.] Also read Vishnu Dharma, Ch. 76.

TOPIC 80.

God alone the Universal Proprietor &c.

The Universal Father is the Only Lord. All others who arrogate to themselves such independence are thieves. The lesser gods are also such. They eat sacrificial food which properly belongs to God, and when the sacrificers seek them with their prayers for boons, they run away like thieves. For these gods but rob from the sacrificers what is God's own, and they have nothing which they can call their own that they can grant. A certain Ṣrîvaishṇava went to another Srivaishṇava's house. Finding the master absent at home, the hungry guest bound his wife fast to a post thinking she would refuse him food in her master's absence. The good huswife, of a pious nature, on the other hand was willing to help the guest with all hospitality even in her Lord's absence. But the guest knew it not, and so he helped himself to food without her and was just about to depart when the master of the house returned and learnt all from his lady. He felt rejoiced that a guest had so honored him, and so ran after to thank him. But the guest mistook his intention; and having acted the thief, his guilty conscience made him run. He was running for fear, and the master was running after him to *thank* him !—So both ran !!! [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV, p. 2031. "Nâḍînâr" iv-10-2]

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1. All the Saviours of the world have done this service to God. The virtue in their work consisted in its purity of purpose, holiness of intent, and absence of self-glorification. The powers of salvation delegated to Holy Saints are stated to be even more efficacious than if God Himself had directly exercised them. Bhâgavata says for example [X-84-11]:—

"Not all the copious waters of the Sacred Rivers, not all the idols made of mud and stone, but saints alone purify by mere sight. Volumes have been written on the high vocation God's apostles on earth are appointed to fulfil. The wonderful book called the Word-Jewel of Lokâchârya, translated by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Iyengar, Division 6, on "Teacher's Saving Power" may be read, Also *Kanninun-sirut tâmbu*, by St. Madhura-kavi. Cp:

TOPIC 81.

Immovable Faith in one God.

Firm faith in one only God characterizes True Believers. Ambarîsha's story is related thus in illustration:—Vishṇu Himself, the Universal Lord, resolved to test his steadiness of mind. He put on Indra's disguise, and appeared to him riding on Airâvata, the white Elephant. "Dost thou wish for any boon?" quoth He. Not knowing that it was Vishṇu Himself riding on Garuda, Ambarîsha disregardingly said:—

"Who art thou? and the insect with thee? I am a votary of Him from whom even thou hast obtained thy high position of Indra. I am not a man to do homage to all strollers like thee in the streets. I salute thee, O godling!; from my presence betake thyself away."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: IV. p: 2061. "Odiyôdi" iv-10-7.]

Jesus' saying:—"No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

God is the only Proprietor, and all things He owns. Any other, owning, is a thief. The great apostle Paul said:—"What hast thou that thou hast not received?" Again.—"And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

[1 Cor; iv-7].

1. Cp: (*a*) "Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." 8 [Matt: iv-8].

"And said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me" [Ibid: iv-9].

"Then Jesus saith to Him: Be gone, Satan: for it is written: *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.*"

[Ibid: iv-10].

(*b*) The giant Kâlanemi, the most powerful of Satan's band, had the audacity to oppose Vishṇu Himself; but because this Satan had all but *five* things in his possession, he was vanquished. The *five* things are:

पंचतंनाम्यवर्तन्त विपरीतेनकर्मणा ।

वेदाधर्मःक्षमासत्यं श्रीश्वनारायणाश्रया ॥

[Harivamsa: ivix-1].

[Trans: on p: 95].

TOPIC 82.

The power of faith in one God.

There was a saint ripe in wisdom, by name Tirumazhiṣaippiıâṅ [B. C. 4202—the son of Rishi Bhṛigu].[1] He sat in a temple sewing his old torn-out garments; when Rudra and his wife Pârvati passed by; but he never paid them any regard. Pârvati asked her husband:—"How, when thou art so supreme, doth this creature take no notice of us, but sitteth with his legs stretched, in his own nonchalant style?".

Rudra: "He can be no other than Vishṇu's devout Worshipper."

Pârvati: "Then let us approach him and test." Thus they both drew near, and asked:—

"Who art thou? when mortals see the immortals, it is usual for them to show their submission, follow them, beg and obtain from them boons, and so on. But thy conduct is otherwise. Thou dost not even withdraw thy legs, when we are here, as a mark of respect; dost not care to show us honors due to our dignity; nor dost thou pray for gifts."

Pirân: "Well said; certainly I would do all that, but could you grant salvation (moksha)?"

Rudra: "Salvation? No; that is out of my jurisdiction. That is only attainable by resorting to Vishṇu, and too if He grant it out of His grace."

Pirân: "Well, canst thou postpone death of creatures from to-day to to-morrow, for example?"

"Because of evil deeds
The five-fold virtues lagged behind:
Vedas and Righteousness,
And Forbearance, and Truth,
And Ṣrî of Nârâyaṇa."

1. Read our *Holy Lives of Dravida Saints*.

Rudra: "Oh! that depends also upon the actions of the creatures. I cannot determine it."

Pirân: "Then, what canst thou do for me? Please, then, decree that this thread which I hold, do follow the needle as I sew. Thus mayst thou be satisfied and go thy way."

Rudra grew wroth at this insult and opened his third eye in the forehead. The saint on seeing this simply pointed him to the innumerable such eyes which he posseessd in his leg!"[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IV. p: 2061: ôdiyôḍî" iv-10-7].

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1. Cp. (a) ईश्वराद्ज्ञानमन्विच्छेत् मोक्षमिच्छेज्जनार्दनात् ।

(b) Ṣrîkanṭha in his Bhâshya on Ṣrî-Sûkta [Edtn. 1881. Vâṇî-Nilaya Press; Madras] quotes thus:—

ऐश्वर्यमीश्वरादिच्छेत् मोक्षमिच्छेज्जनार्दनात् ॥

(c) In Harivamṣa 270-31, Rudra (i.e Ṣiva) himself says:—

मुक्तिप्रदातासर्वेषां विष्णुरेवनसंशयः ॥

(d) "And call none your father upon earth. For one is your Father who is in Heaven [Matt. xxiii-9].

(e) Paramahamsa Râmakṛishṇa's saying 7 [vide Brahmavâdin. P: 146 Vol: vi-No 3]:—"Be not like Ghaṇṭâkarṇa, in thy bigotry. There was a man, who worshipped Ṣiva but hated all other Deities. One day Ṣiva appeared to him, and said: 'I shall never be pleased with thee so long as thou hatest.' The man kept silent. After a few days, Ṣiva again appeared to him. This time he appeared as Hari-Hara, namely, one side of the body was that of Siva, the other side that of Vishṇu. The man was half pleased and half displeased. He laid his offerings on the side representing Ṣiva, and did not offer anything to the side representing Vishṇu. Then Ṣiva said! "Thy bigtory is unconquerable. I, by assuming this dual aspect, tried to convince thee that all gods and goddesses are but the various aspects."

(f) For Ṣaivas interfering with Holy Texts, vide Saṭhagopa Râmânujâchârya's Tamil B.A. Text. for 1900 Ft. note.

TOPIC 83.

Certainty of salvation by pure faith in one Supreme God.

Bhattar was once reading the life of Yayâti.[1] Two good men in the audience, Piḷḷai Vizhupp-Araiyar and Âppân Tiruvazhundûr-Araiyar asked him what chief moral lesson did the life of Yayâti—related in such Traditions (as the Vishṇu Purâṇa) which are but commentaries on the Vedas—convey?

Quoth Bhattar:—"It inculcates this truth, that the lesser gods, when propitiated, grant men their desires, but envy and malice at man's elevation to their status, rankle in their breasts, and they wait for an opportunity to deprive them of that high status; whereas God, our Universal Father, is never influenced by such passions, for to Him there is no happiness but the happiness of His children. Hence Yayâti's life teaches us the lesson that we must never resort to lesser gods, but trust the One Universal Lord for all our benefactions. Further, do we not learn from Râmâyaṇa that this Lord, Incarnate as Râma, with his brother Lakshmaṇa, stood before Viṣvâmitra Rishi in suppliant attitude as his humble servants and ready to do his bidding?"

The Questioners again:—"But sire, we learn that in the doings of even this Universal Lord, when incarnate as Kṛishṇa, his own kinsmen the Yâdavas were made to perish by the sea-side, the very reeds and rushes, growing there, turn-

1. (*a*) Only the highest merit, obtained by trust in One God procures an eternal home in Heaven. But minor degrees of merit such as propitiating minor deities procure only short leases of happiness in the mansions of these lesser beings. For example King Yayâti merited Indra's heaven. But Indra watched for an opportunity nay even conspired one; and then ejecting Yayâti from his abode, threw him down to earth.

(*b*) Read the following verses of Bhagavad-gîta showing the difference of results between faith in one supreme God, and faith in inferior deities:—ix-23; viii-26; vii-23; with commentaries of Râmânuja.

[our English Translation.]

ing into fatal weapons in their hands. How was this ? "

Bhattar :—" No stone was left unturned by Lord Kṛishṇa for the redemption of these graceless people. For their sake the Lord brought from Kubera—the Lord of wealth—even the Treasures known as Ṣaṇkha Nidhi and Padma Nidhi [1] ; and yet Yâdavas deserved to share the fate which they had deserved by their irreclaimable ways."

The Questioners :—" Then it causes us also fear that even our dependence on the one Lord is not destitute of danger."

Bhattar :—" Fear not. The Yâdavas looked upon the Lord, not as God, but as their ordinary companion, a mere skin-relation, a mere blood-kinsman ; and therefore this temporary material relation lasted only as long as the temporary body lasted, and then ceased, whereas we rely on the Lord as our eternal and Infinite God, and we claim spiritual relationship with Him through our soul and not the body ; our desire also is not for earthly gain but the regaining of the pristine purity of the soul as essentially cor-relate to God, and therefore the fruit that we shall obtain is of the spirit and lasts eternally like the spirit itself."[2]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. IV. p. 2063. " ôḍiyôdi " iv-10-7].

TOPIC 84.

Nârâyaṇa—the sole Granter of all good.

Mârkanḍeya-Rishi volunteered a long time to win the

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1. Kubera is the Lord of the Nine Great Treasures, called the Padma, Mahâ-padma, Ṣankha, Makara, Kacchapa, Mukunda, Nanda, Nîla and Kharva.

2. St. Ignatius converted the once proud vain-minded St Francis Xavier by often repeating the wisdom :—" *For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul* or what exchange shall a man give for his soul ?"

[Matt : xvi-23].

grace of Rudra; and Rudra pleased with his penances said: "Mârkaṇḍeya! like thyself, I myself had to wait on another, greater than myself, in order to win the position which I now hold.[1] Thou hast waited on me so long, I should not send thee away without recommending thee to our Sovereign Nârâyaṇa,[2] the One God, who shall requite thee for all thy services to me. What I can do for thee is but what the rules of hospitality demand. For when a guest happens to come to our house, the host must offer him food; but if the host happens to have no food, he is bound, by the rules of hospitality, as the next alternative, to guide the hungry guest to a good neighbour's house where he is sure to be fed. (Otherwise the host will sin.)

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. IV. P. 2065. "Pukkaḍimai" iv-10-8].

TOPIC 85.

The ineffable bounty of God's Love and Pardon.

When the profusion and the prodigality, as we may express, of God's mercy begins to rain on us, who could stop it?. Embâr said that there is a mystical sense conveyed when Lord Râma, God Incarnate, said to his followers Sugrîva and others with reference to the sworn enemy Râvaṇa:—

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1. (a) Read Bhag: Cf: vii-22:—

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हितान् ॥

(b) Also Brahma-Sûtra iii-2-37.

फलमत उपपत्तेः ॥

2. Op: शिवश्च नारायणः शक्रश्च नारायणः ।

[Nârâyaṇopanishat] vide note 99, p: 144 English: Tatva-traya by Pârthasârathi Yôgi.

"The suppliant will I ne'er forsake,
Nor my protecting aid refuse
When one in name of friendship sues.
Though faults and folly blot his fame,
Pity and help he (*Râvaṇa*) still may claim."

The sense is that God, while Omniscient, elects to seem as if He be devoid of knowledge; or while remembering all, elects to be forgetful; while Omnipotent, he elects to be incapable![1] These contrasts are justified thus: When one becomes God's dependent, God blots out of His Omniscience his past sins; and forgets the sins which he may commit unintentionally after his regeneration by knowledge; if by any reason God be obliged to forsake a sinner,—albeit as Omnipotent He could do it,—yet He elects to be incapable of abandoning him.[2] All this arises from our essential alliance with God, or the eternal bond of relation subsisting between God and soul, as Creator and creature.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2087, " Kaiyâr " v-1-1].

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1. Cp: (*a*) अविज्ञातासहस्रांशुः ॥

[Bhattârya's Sahasra-nâma—Bhâshya.]

(*b*) "It is commonly and truly said that half the value of a gift depends upon the way in which it is conferred. The generous benefactor dispenses his bounty with such delicacy and grace that, while the benefit is enjoyed, the hand of the benefactor is scarcely felt.* * * The gifts of the Creator............are dispensed by an unseen hand, and in such profusion and with such uniformity that the priceless value of each is lost in their multiplicity." [P: 19. The Voice of Creation by F. C. Oakeley, M A.].

2. Cp: "Does it not even come to ourselves sometimes in prayer, when we have been dwelling long upon some one beautiful attribute of the Divine Nature, to ask ourselves in amazement, how it is that God can possibly forgive sin, and forgiving it, can look so completely as if He had forgotten it as well, and even seem to esteem us more when we rise from a shameful fall, than if we had stood upright in His grace and our integrity all the while." [P. 241. "The Creator and the Creature by F. W. Faber, D. D.]

TOPIC 86.

God's Freedom fettered by His mercy.

St. Nammâzhvâr when he realized the infinite nature of God's Mercy, to which the faithful became heirs, exclaimed:—" O Mercy! thou hast deprived God of the freedom of His just will. Safe under the wings of Mercy, no more can God Himself (Mercy's Lord), even of His will, tear Himself away from me: for if He can do so I shall still exclaim I am victor, for He must purchase the freedom of His will by denying to Himself Mercy; but which, being *merciful*, he cannot do. A devout lady by name Aiyakaḷ-ammâḷ visited Lord Varadarâja's shrine (at Kâñchîpuram) on her way back from Vijayanagara. She exclaimed: " God, I have now clasped Thy feet firmly; try if Thou cans't spurn me and shake Thyself off from me!"

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2088, " Kaiyâr " v-1-2].

TOPIC 87.

The depth of God's Redeeming love.

Piḷḷaiy-amudanâr used to exclaim: "How Great, and Worthy Thou art, O Lord of the discus! and how vile and unworthy I am" When so exclaiming, he used to raise his arms to Heaven at the first part and drop them down earthward at the second part of this expression.[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2111, " Ammân. " v-1-7].

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1. Cp. (*a*) " Not only can the soul that knows its misery have a great confidence in God, but cannot have a true confidence unless it has a knowledge of its misery; for this knowledge and confession of our misery introduces us to God. Thus all the great saints, Job, David and the rest began their prayers by the acknowledgment of their misery

TOPIC 88.

Purity (or Sincerity) in Love to God.

Anasûya (the wife of Atri) congratulated Sîtâ on her fidelity to her Husband, Lord Râma, and told her that a true faithful wife was she who looked on her Lord as God Himself. When so complimented, Sîtâ out of bashfulness and modesty stood with down-cast eyes and quietly gave out that the test of her fidelity was not when she had a husband like Râma, perfect in beauty as well as graces, but when Râma should stand without these; when he should be found even the reverse of what He was.[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2211, "Kaḍiyan" v-3-5].

and unworthiness; so that it is a most excellent thing to own one's self poor, vile, abject, and unworthy of appearing in the presence of God." [P. 35; Ch: iii: Bk. i. "*Consoling Thoughts* by St. Fr: de Sales.]

(*b*) This is called *naichy-ânusandhâna*. Cp: the verse by Saint Yamunâchârya in his Stotra-Ratna: "*Tad aham &c.*"= "O Perfection! justify to Thyself the eternal natural affinity between Thyself and Myself, that without me Thou canst not be Lord; that without Thee I cannot be liege."

(*c*) "The gulf between God and ourselves seems infinite and impassable; yet grace bridges it over, and passes it with a rapidity to which the speed of the electric spark is weary slowness." [P. 2[illegible] Ch: v: Bk. ii Dr. F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature].

(*d*) "Without repeated meditations on the Divine Perfections we cannot fathom the depth of our own nothingness, the horror of our own baseness, the inconceivable pertinacity of our sin * * * * Only let us remember, for life is short and there is much to do, that right down through the abyss of our own nothingness lies the shortest road to the contemplation of the Divine Beauty." [P. 261. Ibid].

(*e*) "My God and my All! Who art thou, O Sweetest Lord? and who am I, thy servant and a base worm?" [St. Francis Assisi.]

1, (*a*) Read Râmâyaṇa Bk. II-Cantos. 117, & 118. *Anasûya to Sîtâ*:

"Those women gain high spheres above
Who still unchanged their husband's love,
Whether they dwell in town or wood,
Whether their hearts be ill or good.
Though wicked, poor, or led away
In loves' forbidden paths to stray,
The noble matron still will deem

TOPIC 89.

All the godly are to be honored, irrespective of social bearings.

What if they be only our sons? what if they be only our disciples? When they are found embarked on the way to God, they become worthy of worship to all. This truth was acted upon by Kûrattâzhvâr, the father of Kûrattâzhvân. The father lost his wife (i.e. the mother of Âzhvân) and he was thinking of entering again on the married state, but meanwhile a doubt assailed him:—"If I marry again," he thought, "it will not suit my son, as step-mothers are always so; but if I do not marry, it will be against the ordinances of Ṣâstras which require that one ought either to lead the life of the householder or ought to take up the habit of the monastic order. He cannot hang between. How shall I act now? Shall I please myself or please my son?" After thus deliberating for some time he decided to be on the son's side rather than the side of Ordinances. "I shall thus be more serviceable to him who is making for holiness," he reflected, "than be a slavish stickler to the ordinary rules which prescribe for one's selfish gratification." He thus gave up the idea of taking a new wife.[1]

[Bhag. Vish: Bk. V. p: 2298. "Eṅṅane" V-5-1].

Her lord a deity supreme."

Sita's reply to Anasûyâ.—

"No marvel, best of dames, thy
 speech,
The duties of a wife should teach;
Yet I, O lady, also know
Due reverence to my lord to show.
Were he the meanest of the base
Unhonored with a single grace,
My husband still I ne'er would leave
But firm through all to him would
 cleave."

(*b*) This is typical of the purity of love to God. Thomas à Kempis says:—"He therefore that is not prepared to suffer all things and renounce his own will, to adhere invariably to the will of his Beloved, is unworthy of the name of lover. It is essential to that exalted character to endure the severest labours and the bitterest afflictions, and to let nothing in created nature turn him aside from the supreme and infinite good." [Imitations of Christ. Bk. iii-Ch: iv.]

1. Cp: (*a*) The conversion of Buddha's father and wife, to Bud-

TOPIC 90.

God's will in all matters.

Kûrattâzhvân's resignation to God's will was so full and unqualified that he had no will of his own even in the ordinary concerns of his household. One event in his life is here given as an illustration of his resigned will. One day Âṇdâl, the wife of this saint, remonstrated with him for having taken no thought about the weddings of their sons Bhattârya and Srîrâmap-piḷḷai, though they had arrived at the proper age for becoming householders. The saint told his wife :—" Is that so? Then, when I go to the temple to-morrow, bring thy sons there." The good wife did as directed, the saint standing before Lord Raṅganâtha silently consulting His will. Then a voice came and asked the saint what he was contemplating about. The saint: "They say these boys have arrived at marriageable age." The Lord: "The affair is my own. I shall see to the boys properly matched." The very next day, some gentry brought Manni and gave her in marriage to Bhattar.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2318. " Niṛaindavan " V-5-7.]

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dha the Ascetic :—

" Then the King amazed,
Inquired : " What treasure?" and the Teacher took
Meekly the royal palm, and while they paced
Through worshipping streets—the princess and the king
On either side—he told the things which make
For peace and pureness."

* * * * *

" So they came
Into the Palace-porch, Suddhôdana
With brows unknit drinking. the mighty words,
And in his own hand carrying Buddha's bowl,
Whilst a new light brightened the lovely eyes
Of sweet Yasodhara and sunned her tears;
And that night entered they the Way of Peace.

[The Light of Asia by Edwin Arnold.]

(b) The conversion of Vishṇu-priyâ, the chaste wife of Lord Gauraṇga, to his becoming an ascetic, by resigning her :—" Vishṇu-priyâ said that she agreed to per-

TOPIC 91.

God's specific presence in Forms.

St. Nammâzhvâr, in his ecstatic moments of Divine Union, declared in transports of rapture how God with all his ineffable radiant beauty entered into him and filled him. One day while Jîyar (Nañjîyar) was on his way to the Temple of Lord Raṅganâtha, he met Piḷḷân (= Tiruk-kurugaip-pirân-Piḷḷân) and asked him :—

" Holy Sire, is God's omnipresence confined to his essence (*svarûpa*) being present everywhere (*vyâpti*), or is He also specially present in His Beautiful Person (*vigraha-vyâpti*) ? "

Answered Piḷḷân :—" The omnipresence by *essence* is universal, or generic, whereas presence by Person is particular or specific,-an act of benign Grace on his part to so become manifest, and a reward to sanctity on man's part. When both grace and sanctity co-operate, the Divine Person of God who abides latent in the heart becomes manifest."[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2321. " Niṛaindavan ".v-5-7].

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form her part of the compact, and cheerfully accept the situation. The fact is, the idea that her sufferings meant the salvation of mankind, gave her a joy which drowned the sorrows that the prospects of a temporary separation from her husband gave her." [P. 95-96, Vol. II. Lord Gauranga, by Ṣiṣir Kumâr Ghose.]

1. In the works of the Viṣishtâdvaita Philosophers, three kinds of presence are distinguished: (1) That by essence (*Svarûpa*) by which the Universe exists (equivalent to the *Father* of Christianity); (2) that by will (*sankalpa*) by which the universal constitution stands or falls; by which it is willed as eternal or transient (nearly equivalent to the *Son or Word* of Christianity); (3) that by Person (*vigraha* or *antaryâmi* manifest) by which sanctified souls are blessed and beatified (nearly equivalent to the *Holy Ghost* of Christianity). The first is *Being* (*sat*) the Root of (2) and (3); (2) is Wisdom (*jñâna*) and (3) is Love (*ânanda*), the Two Attributes of (1) Being. (*vide* Commentary on *Tatvatraya* on chit, 39 "Dhâryam &c.") This is the Mystery of Trinity. The Epiphany, p: 118, July 28, 1900 has very clearly expressed this truth thus:—" God, by virtue of His Divine Immanence,

is present in everything that exists: it is by the power and force of this presence that everything is kept in existence, and if it were withdrawn, everything would vanish into non-existence. But over and above this general or Universal immanence as a force throughout the whole atomic matter which constitutes the basis of the material universe, God has other and higher modes of presence. His presence, for instance, in the human spirit, is much more specialised than His presence in mere matter. Again His indwelling in specially holy or saintly spirits, (e.g., the prophets,) is far closer and more intimate than either of these preceeding modes, though it does not supersede them." The Viṣishtâdvaita further speaks of Incarnations which is a 'manifestation on earth so as to be visibly an Object of love for all men's (fleshly) eyes to see " [vide: *Bh*: *Gî*, with Râmânuja's commentary p: 9, by the Author]. On this point the Epiphany quoted above continues:—" This being so, Christians do not find it difficult to acknowledge, on the authority of revelation, that God can take yet another step forward, and effect a still further heightening or intensification of His presence in a human nature,—even to the extent of constituting Himself its sole Ego (i.e., becoming incarnate, — without thereby withdrawing from any previous method of presence (*ajahat svabhâva*, see Gîta: *Ibid*). Indeed to us it seems the natural and logical outcome of that Divine condescension which first stooped to have a presence in created nature at all."

'As to Sat, Chit, and Ânanda being parallel to the Trinity, consult St. Francis de Sales' Treatise on Love of God. pp. 37 & 56 Ch: xv. Bk: i. Also read Dr. Faber's Creator and Creature.

As to the ravishment by the Presence of Person which St. Nammâzhvâr says, *filled* him &c., compare:—" We shall be transported with happiness at seeing that God gives Himself to us without reserve or limitation on His part, (*âtma-dâ*) yet that He is an Abyss which we cannot sound—a source of bliss which we cannot enjoy in proportion to the infinity of his perfections, which will always be infinitely above the reach of our capacity."

"This vision (called the Beatific Vision, *vide*. Happiness of Heaven by Rev: F. J. Boudreaux) produces two transports of admiration in the blessed; one is excited by the eternal beauty which they contemplate, and the other by their own incapability of penetrating the abyss of this infinite loveliness. This is, O God! the happy lot of those who enjoy thy presence: what they behold in thee is wonderful, but what they cannot see is still more admirable." [P: 139. Ch: xv-Bk. III. St: Fr: de Sales' Treatise on Love of God.]

This Topic has a special reference to The Institution of Image-worship. A remark by Ruskin is here of great value in furnishing thought for reflection to iconoclastic minds:—" Nothing is more wonderful than the depths of meaning which nations in their first days of

TOPIC 92.

Joy with God above all joys.

In the transport of holy joy consequent on communion with God, Saints realize God everywhere, and feel they are like lost and identified with Him. In one of these rapturous states of ecstatic bliss, St. Nammâzhvâr exclaimed that he seemed to be all in all in God's Universe which contained Heaven as well as Hell. Jîyar here explained that to one whose end is God, Heaven and Hell make very little difference. For, Heaven and Hell—the one as full of happiness, and the other as full of misery, as to ordinary men appear—are equally despicable to them as compared with God Himself.[1] They would abhor and detest Heaven if there were no God, as welcome and embrace Hell if God were there.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2365. "Kôlaṅgoḷ" v-6-10].

TOPIC 93.

Joy over saints' gracious message to men.

St. Nammâzhvâr exclaimed: "Mighty Lord of the Celes-

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thought, like children, can attach to the rudest symbols, and what is to us grotesque or ugly, like a child's doll, can speak to them the loveliest things." "I say this, emphaticelly, that the tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic discomforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively offered and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England."

[P. 32. The Seven Lamps of Architecture].

[A most scientific article on the subject may be read in Vol. III, Brahmavâdin Pp. 539 ff.]

Swedenborg says: "God is universally and singularly is in all things of religion and worship." [P: 10]. "Every one who believes that God is a Man is able to affirm for himself that there are Infinite things in God. For because He is a Man, He has a body, and every thing belonging to the body; thus He has a Face, a Breast, an Abdomen, Loins, Feet. * * * In God-man they are Infinite." (Cp. *Sahasra-sîrshâ*) [P: 13, *Divine Love and Wisdom*].

1. Cp. 'If I make my bed in hell, Thou art there'. [Psalms: 139-8.]

tials! Thou hast made my heart Thy tabernacle.[1] So intimate and close is Thy union with me, that I beseech thee never more to leave me—me so lovingly clinging to Thee!". The last day of a course of Holy Festivals, had just been celebrated in Ṣrîrañgam; when Bhattârya, after getting the place where he lived, watered and rendered cool and agreeable (Ṣrîrâñgam being a hot place), sat down meditating on that sentiment (above). He requested his disciple Jîyar to sing that verse to him, he himself following him in a heart-melting strain. As Jîyar sang, he feelingly cried:—"O joy! that there have been saints like Nammâzhvâr born on this earth! saints who have left us such consoling verses as these,—verses which melt our stony hearts!! One may undergo the severest course of discipline and austerity; one may have subdued his senses,—such as those commencing with *Yama*[2] &c.,—but the heart inside may remain as hard as steel. Only verses such as these succeed in tempering and liquifying them." Nañjîyar took delight in often relating this incident to his disciples.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2410. "*Vand-aruḷi*" v-7-7].

1. Cp: 'I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.' [Ps: 61-4].

2. For a definition of *Yama*, *Niyama* &c. and a discourse on the psychology of that process, see pages 35 ff. Part II of our Lectures on Inspiration, Intuition and Ecstasy. Another definition from the work called "*Yoga-Yâjñavalkya* is here given: (1) *Yama* is the practice of the virtues of continence, non-injury, non-accepting (gifts &c.), truthfulness in order to bring about the subjugation of the senses. (2) *Niyama* is the higher lesson of the virtues of purity, contenment, and austerity, study of scriptures, and love to God. (3) *Âsana* is posture of different kinds, so that it may help concentration of the mind. (4) *Prânâyâma*, the practice of regulating breath as per rules laid down, in order to keep the body in good health. (5) *Pratyâhâra* is the endeavour to abstract the mind from running out to pleasures of the senses and to fix it on God. (6) *Dhârana* is the intensification of abhorrence for sense-objects and fixture in God. (7) *Dhyâna* is the meditating on God in His Essense, Attributes Person, the magnificent pageantry of His creation and His acts. (8) *Samâdhi* is the continuance of the subjects of meditation, as well at times out of meditatiou, as in fixed times of meditation.

TOPIC. 94

Ecstasy over God's Sovereign Grace.

When Âppân Tiruvazhundûr Araiyar chanted St. Nammâzhvâr's verse "Vandaruḷi" [v-7-7. T. V. M.], he took cymbals in his hands, and while uttering the phrase "Vandaruḷi" he was so overcome by the sentiment conveyed therein that he felt choked and could not proceed further [The meaning of the phrase is: "Out of Thy *sole Grace*, Lord!, Thou vouchsafest to come to me", expressive of the Sovereign love, compassion and sacrifice of the Almighty in approaching the insignificant and mean creature, man, and making his poor heart His tabernacle].[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2411. "Vand-aruḷi" v-7-7].

TOPIC 95.

What doth the name of God 'Nectar' imply?

St. Nammâzhvâr, when visiting the Holy Shrine at Tirukkoḍandai [Kumbhaghoṇam], addressed the Lord therein enthroned as "Ârâvamudè", meaning: "O! Nectar Endless."[2] For God alone is such Nectar. The nectar extracted from the churning of the Milky Ocean, is saltwater compared to this.

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1. Cp: (*a*) There are brief sweetnesses in prayer, which come now and then in life like shooting moonbeams through rents on close packed cloudy nights [Faber's Creator and Created p: 408].

(*b*) "No wonder God should become man, in order to be with him, or should die for him, in order to save him. No wonder he should abide with him in mute reality in the tabernacle, to feed his soul, and to sustain him and keep alive His creature's love by His own silent company. * * * * How He holds His creature in His hand for ever!" [P: 58. Ch. ii, Bk. i. Dr. F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature].

(*c*) Read Lokâchârya's. *Tatvatraya*, on *Antaryâmin* [*Isvara*].

2. This single phrase: "Ârâvamudé" (=Inexhaustible Fountain of Bliss) carries much meaning. For its elucidation, we extract the following:—"After the desires of our heart shall have been fully satisfied, after they shall have been

To deserve even this saline essence, the conditions required are high birth among the Devas, the practice of rigid chastity &c., and even then, only a little of it is partakable. Not so the Inexhaustible Nectar—God. Every creature is eligible for this Nectar. This Nectar is ever enjoyable. It alone too is the remedy or expiator for all sins of omission in the fulfilment, by man, of the proclaimed will of God *(Ṣâstra)* as regards his spiritual conduct.

There lived a Saint in the North of India by name Lokasâranga-mahâmuni. A traveller from the South went there. The Mahâmuni asked :—" Son, what tidings there ? " Traveller :—" There, sire, they have a work called Tiru-vây-mozhi

satiated by the perfect possession of God Himself, we shall acknowledge with indescribable joy, that, far from exhausting this infinite source of bliss by beholding and enjoying it, we shall ever have new perfections to discover, all infinitely amiable, infinitely capable of replenishing the heart, but which God alone can comprehend and love, because God alone can understand Himself [P : 139, Ch : xv. Bk : iii on The Love of God].

" By sanctifying grace He is incessantly, habitually, powerfully, superabundantly, pouring into us marvellous communications of His divine Nature. Each undulation of it, as it reaches and informs our souls, is a greater miracle than the creation of the universe. One touch, and we pass from darkness to light; one touch and all our eternity is changed. * * * Our souls are made, as it were, a musical instrument, worthy that the hands of God should play upon it, * * * The impulses of the Divine Will, the pressure of actual grace, is ever varying the music which they draw forth, as the rapid touch of the Creator's hand flies over the many keys of the complex heart of man ; and all the while one grace is leading to another in wonderful progression, one the prophecy of what is yet to come, and another the crown of what has gone before, with such a vista of graces in the prospect that no man ever reaches to the term. [Pp : 254-255, Ch. v. Bk. ii. Dr. F. W. Faber's " Creator and Creature "]

" Is there any novelty equal to his daily fresh discoveries in the rich depths of the Divine Perfections ?" [Pp. 68. Ch : ii. Bk. i. Ibid].

3. Cp : Bhâg : Pur : x-13-2 : "*satâm ayam,*" and xii-12-51 : "*Tad eva ramyam.*" And *Apûrva-vad vismayam âdadhanayâ* [Stotra Ratna].

by St. Nammâzhvâr, which all good men there hold in great esteem and veneration."

Mahâmuni :—"Then, pray recite some one verse from that work, if thou dost know."

Traveller :—"I have but learnt one phrase, sire, viz; "Ârâvamudê". Mahâmuni : "What! do they have such a sweet Epithet there for the God-head, when there are so many others, ancient ones such as Nârâyaṇa?" So exclaiming, he immediately left for the blessed Land which gave birth to, and which uttered so sweet an epithet. He would not bear to stop in his own land where existed on such sweet name.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2433. "Ârâvamude" V-8-1].

TOPIC 96.

God near and yet far. A tantalizing experience.

St. Nammâzhvâr in his enthusiasm to flee to and enjoy, the Lord resident at Tiruvallavâzh, [vide, T. V. M. v-9] remonstrated with his bosom-friends,—who would throw cold water on his attempted scheme to flee to the Holy Land. Jîyar said : "I experienced like this saint once." After he became the disciple of Bhattârya, he once came from Ṣrîraṅgam to his own native country Maisûr, and returning, was anxious to be at Ṣrîraṅgam in time for the Great Festival there. But by the time he reached the North bank of Kâveri near Uttamar Kôvil, the river was unexpectedly in full flood. He could not cross it. All the night through, however, he could sight on the opposite bank the soul-entrancing sights of the Lord's processions, the soul-stirring music in attendance, and other rapturous scenes. But he could not go. What could he do but exclaim in great distress:—"Oh that I cannot be there!" This was how St. Nammâzhvâr contemplated the Lord from the outskirts of the Holy Place of Tiruvallavâzh, which he had managed to reach, despite

his objecting friends. Similar was the experience of the three mind-born sons of Brahmâ viz. Ekata, Dvita and Trita who, when they went to Ṣvetadvîpa, which they found shut against their entrance, had no other alternative but to remain near the outskirts and enjoy the scene and the saintly events such as worshipping Vishṇu, &c. that were being enacted there;—but in mournful banishment[1] themselves from taking personal part in soul bewitching events.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2480 " Mânêy " V-9-1].

TOPIC 97.

That Spot Holy where God has trod.

When God incarnates on earth and choses particular spots thereon as centres for attracting mankind so that they may thus be saved, such spots become so hallowed as even to draw angels down to reside there, and keep company with God. When God incarnated as Lord Râma, one of the Eternals (*nityâh*) was born with Him as Lakshmaṇa, and the celestials (*devâh*) assumed the Forms of monkeys (and served the Lord as His army &c.,); and Terrestrials—who were Godward bent—like (the giant-class) Vibhîshaṇa, became the Lord's followers

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1. The story is related in the Mahâbhârata, Ṣânti Parva, Moksha Dharma, Chapters 135 to 137 in extenso. An extract would suffice here:—" On the northern shore of the Ocean of Milk there is an island of great splendour called by the name of White Island. The men that inhabit that Island have complexions as white as the rays of the Moon and who are devoted to Nârâyaṇa. * * * Eagerly desirous of beholding Him and our hearts full of Him, we arrived at last at that large Island called White Island. Arrived there we could see nothing. Indeed, our vision was blinded. * * * * "Go hence, ye Munis, to the place whence ye have come! That Great Deity is incapable of being ever seen by one that is destitute of devotion." [P. 752 ff. Pratâp Chandra Ray's Edition]. Also read the excursion of Râvaṇa into these Islands and his discomfiture there in Uttara Râmâyaṇa: 5th Sagra (Adhika-pâṭhe).

and dependents. The angels even dwelt like trees, rocks and shrubs in such Holy Spots, lest, if they were moveable things, their free-wills might perchance incline them to stray away from their Lord. It is recorded here that in the days of Embâr, one Jananâtha-Brahma-râya a disciple, ordered trees being felled at the upper part of the island of Şrîrañgam where the two branches of the River Kâveri (Kâveri and Kolladam) divide. On hearing this, Embâr:—

"What! Allâlap-perumâl (nickname of Râyar) you go and ruin God's creation?"

Râyar with a view to elicit some more interesting discourse from Embâr, replied:—

"Sire, is there a place in the universe where God's creation is not?" Embâr:—"Not so my friend! There is a distinction between places in general and places which, in particular, God has chosen for His own dwelling-place. The groves immediately surrounding such holy spots are like the hand-garden of a great King, who Himself with His Royal consort, waters and tends them,—who therefore have touched the sacred trees with their own hands. (The sacred groves, which ever cling to and never move from the Holy spots, are like the eternals who never separate from God).

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p, 2488 "Mânêy" v-9-1].

TOPIC 98.

Comformity to God's will preferable.

'Let *Thy* will be done, not *mine*', characterizes all saints who have entirely surrendered their will to the dispensations of Providence.[1] It is, as an illustration of this, recorded that

1. Cp: (a) 'Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: But yet not my will, but thine be done.' [Luke. xxii-42].
(b) 'I delight to do thy will, O my God. [Ps: xl-8.]

Kûrattâzhvân's impatience to leave this world, and ascend to the spiritual realms of the blessed, became so vehement that he went to Lord Raṅganâtha, and preferred to him his intention, after praying to Him most fervently. The Lord condescended to say:—"Within three days, thou shalt have thy discharge." Âzhvân was joyed, left the premises of the Holy Sanctuary (within which he dwelt) and went out of the ramparts in happy anticipation of death. Râmânuja, (Âzhvân's Guru) came to know this, and running to his disciple asked:— "Alas, Âzhvân! how canst thou have thought of soaring to the Blessed Regions when I am still here?."

Âzhvân: "Excuse me, sire, I forgot all about this in the depth of my weariness for this world." Soliloquizing to himself thus: "Then I shall also repair to the Lord, and submit *my* prayer to Him as well, supplicating Him to change His mind so as to allow of Âzhvân remaining on earth for some time longer," Râmânuja went as far as the outer door of Raṅganâtha's Sanctum; but checking himself suddenly, he stopped and said to himself: "No; I ought not to meddle with God's will, once it has been formed. Let His will be done; let me not be the instrument of interfering with it" [1] So saying he returned, changing his first resolve, formed through his love for Âzhvân.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. V, p. 2527. "Piṛanda" v-10].

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1. Cp: (*a*) "Râma ne'er makes his promise twice"
[Râmâyaṇa ii-18-30]

(*b*) "The suppliant will I ne'er forsake"
[Ibid VI-18-3.]

(*c*) "Bound by a solemn vow I swear
That all my saving help should share
Who sought me in distress and cried,
'Thou art my hope, and none beside'."
[Ibid VI-18-34.]

(*d*) "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"
[Deut 6-16]

TOPIC 99.

A reason for saints' partiality to Krishna Avatâr.

Bhattâryas' disciples asked him once: "How is it Lord, that all the Âzhvârs (saints) have showed a preference for God as Lord Kṛishṇa, not as Lord Râma or any other Incarnation?" Bhattârya satisfied the query thus :—" When a man is subjected to bereavement from his loved ones, the grief caused thereby decreases as time elapses; when it is fresh, its pangs are acute. So to the Âzhvârs, Lord Kṛishṇa's Avatâr is nearest to them in time; i.e. more recent than all the other Avatâras. Hence their lamentations were great. St. Nammâzhvâr who was born just forty five days after the Ascension of Lord Kṛishṇa, groaned thus from love: "Sinful man that I am, I have been born six weeks late! Ah! that what had reached the lip (i.e., Kṛishṇa) hath slipped away!!."

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. V. p. 2528. "Piṛanda" v-10].

TOPIC 100.

The story of the mission of Buddha.

St. Nammâzhvâr refers to the Avatâra of Buddha as a mask put on by Vishṇu in order to sow the seeds of doubt, dissension and heresy amongst unbelievers (as a chastisement for their folly, and subsequent redemption). The story of Buddha is recorded thus :—' Once upon a time, the demon hosts (*asurâh*) invoked Rudra by their rigorous austerities. Rudra appeared and asked them why they did the penance and what they wanted. They said they desired to possess three cities, foe-proof. Rudra granted their request, but warned that the three cities should always travel in the air without touching each other; but if they did ever chance to collide, great misfortune should overtake the demons. "Take care", warned he. Forthwith, three cities came into existence. One was made

of iron, another of silver, and the third of gold[1]. The demons lived there and waged war against the Devas (lower angels) and the Brâhmaṇas on earth who offered libations to them. When sacrifices to the Devas were thus obstructed, the Devas began to lose their strength, and found themselves able neither to vanquish the demons nor even to approach the precincts of the Three Cities. Then all the Deva-hosts with their Patriarch Brahmâ repaired to Rudra and complained to him that they were deprived of their sacrificial offerings, that the demons travelled with their cities, posted themselves at all places where sacrifices were performed, molested and killed the performers; and asked him therefore to destroy them.

Rudra said: "Who would fell a tree planted by himself even if it be a poisonous tree? I cannot do it." Then the Devas next betook themselves to the Milky Ocean *(kshîrâbdhi)* [2], and loudly sued to the Lord there (Mahâ-Vishṇu) for relief. The Lord of the Universe appeared, riding on the Vedic Bird Garuḍa, and asked them their business. They narrated to him all the story, and begged of him to destroy the demons.

Vishṇu: "Could you not all join together and do it?"

"No," said the Devas, "the demons also do perform some acts of virtue and sacrifices, having faith in their efficacy to bring reward. Hence these acts stand in our way to destroy them.

"Then," commanded Vishṇu, "go back to your places, and I shall destroy them." He forthwith put on the disguise of an aged Buddha (wise man), carried a book under his arm, twisted *kuṣa* grass round his finger, and proceeded to the cities

1. For an account, read Yajur-Vêda: vi-2-15.

2. Esoterically, it means the cleansed heart where God is realized. Read Maitrâyani: Up, 7-9 for Buddha. *Vide* note c, p. 118.

of the demons; and there preached to them morals in such a manner that they were taken in and adopted him as their moral adviser. But when they began performing some Yâga-ceremonies, Buddha approached:. "What do ye do", he asked. "We are about to perform a Yâga," said they. "What are these sticks for?", Buddha asked. "For offering into the fire", said they. Buddha:—"Better to be born a grass-eating cow than a stick-eating fire. What are these food-offerings for again?". "For the Devas," said the demons. Buddha: "Indeed it would be good sense to offer thus, if it be good sense that a traveller's hunger be satisfied by the food eaten by another staying at home! It is thus ye hope to derive benefits in return for the food offered to the Devas!! Well, next, what are these goats for?" "To extract the omentum from them and offer to the Gods," said they. "Oh then", Buddha said, "butchers are righteous people, they are!!" By such preachings, the demons were cajoled. Their belief in the efficacy of sacrifices was shaken, and they gave them up. They even began to revile Rudra. Buddha then betook himself to Rudra: "Dost thou see; the demons revile thee?", Said he. Rudra thereon waxed wroth, and resolved to destroy the ungrateful demons. Battle ensued. The Earth became the car, the mountain Mahâ-Meru became the bow, the Lord Vishṇu the arrow, and Rudra, with such helps, exterminated the *vile* demons. Order was then restored, and the Devas were provided as heretofore with their sacrificial offerings by the Brâhmaṇas, &c." [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. V. p. 2550. "Kaḷḷ-vedam" v-10-4].

1. (*a*) Read Vishṇu Purâṇa. iii. 18., and Jâbâli's atheistical speech to Lord Râma [Râmâyaṇa. ii-108] to which Râma angrily replied:—

"My father's thoughtless act I chide
That gave thee honored place,
Whose soul from virtue turned aside,
Is faithless, dark and base.

TOPIC 101.

Martyrdom for one's own God.

Except the one God, all other gods are simply gods on sufferance. None of them can do anything save the one God indwelling them and using them as His instruments. What instruments God chooses, whether animate or inanimate, it makes no difference. Rudra performs one such function: that of the Destroying Angel, by order of the Supreme, in the cosmic economy. In the old days, a cruel ruler of the land wrote on a scroll: "Rudra is the supreme Truth", and commanded all to subscribe to the declaration. Many obeyed. But the sage Âzhvân, brought to that Ruler's presence by compulsion addressed him thus: "Come, king, listen; if thou couldst possibly preserve this scroll against all time's destruction, then thou mightst take pride that what is written thereon could also be proof to destruction. But the God that thou thinkest as supreme is solely so by virtue of such power invested in him by the Lord Paramount of the Kosmos. So do Authoritative Scriptures declare. Now, this day, because thou constrainest me so to do, I might sign in thy scroll, but to-morrow what if a wise man be born and he put me down for a fool!? Rather than face such opprobrium by all the coming generations, I should submit to whatever inquisitorial torture thou mightst subject me to, rather than comply with thy order. [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. V. p. 2553—4 "Kaḷḷa-vêdam" v-10-4]

We rank the Buddhist with the
thief
And all the impious crew
Who share his sinful disbelief,
And hate the right and true."

(b) Cp: "As he (creature) did not make himself, so neither can he give himself his own vocation". [Dr: F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature, p: 55, Ch. ii, Bk i].

(c) This Buddha should not be confounded with Sâkya Muni of B. C. 66. [Read Col. Olcott's *Diary Leaves* in Theosophist for Octr: 1901].

1. Cp. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" [Matt: v-10].

TOPIC 102.

God's readiness to meet His devotees.

What will not God do for those who give their hearts to Him? A certain devotee of the North proficient in singing, was longing to visit Lord Raṅganâtha (Ṣrîraṅgam in the South). He came all the way. On the closing day of a certain festival, during night, Âzhvâr Tiruvaraṅga-pperumâḷ Aṛaiyar—the conductor of the Temple choir—chanted the Hymnal called Tirumâlai [by Saint Bhaktâṅghri-reṇu or Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi Âzhvâr-45 verses], [1] to his heart's content, applauded the Lord in the manner that mahouts sing flattering songs in order to tame rutting elephants. The Lord was highly pleased and was in a humour to do the Aṛaiyar's bidding. 'Lord', he submitted, 'a hearty votary of Thy Holy Feet has travelled all the way from the North—a distance of seven hundered leagues—to visit Thee. Wilt Thou not condescend to honor him with a special recognition of his love for Thee?". "Certainly" vouchsafed the Lord, and from the Holy Laurel tree [புன்னை] in the cloisters of the Temple, the Lord walked forward four rods' length in the hands of His Holy Bearers; and addressing the Holy Choir said:—"Come My Holy Chanters! Is what We have done adequate to the pains taken by this Northern supplicant of Ours?" This tradition illustrates how far God is prepared to approach us when we will but take one step towards him. [2]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. V. p. 2559. "Ninṛavâṛum" v-10-6].

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1. Read our *Holy Lives of Drâviḍâ Saints*.

2. Cp—(*a*) "The love of the devotee for his Lord is but a faint reflection of the love of Him who is love itself. It is said that if a child throws a pebble to the ground, the whole great earth moves towards the pebble as well as draws the pebble to itself; attraction cannot be one-sided. In the spiritual world when man makes one step towards God, God makes a hundred steps towards man, for greatness there, means greatness in giving, and the ocean pours forth its mea-

TOPIC 103.

Saints—Gods on earth.

Saints are gods on earth. They intercede for us with God. Nañjîyar used to say: "Whenever I saw a saint, a devotee of Vishṇu, and I fell at his feet with my head touching them, I felt as if I ate my fill; as if my hunger vanished."[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. VI. p. 2597 "Kâdal" vi-1-2].

TOPIC 104.

Botany or doxology?—An irrelevant question.

Tiruvirunda-varai-mârvan was a disciple of Bhattârya. A friend of his, by name Piḷḷaiy-amudanâr, asked him:—How did your Bhattar explain to you the import of the phrase:

sureless depths towards any drop that seeks its bosom." ["The Value of Devotion" by Annie Besant, p: 263. Theos: Review for May 1906.]

(b) Read Bh: Gi: vii-16 to 18 with commentaries thereon, by the Author.

(c) "He (the Creator, the King of kings) bursts forth all divinely into triumph, because a half-converted sinner has condescended to accept his grace. He bids the angels rejoice, and hold high feast through all the Empyrean Heaven, not because He has evolved some new and wonder-stirring system out of nothing, not because He has called into being some million-worlded nebula, and cast upon it such an effulgence of His beauty as throws all the rest of His creation into the shade,—but because one wretched, unworthy, offensive man has, after an immense amount of divine eloquence and pleading, consented to take the first step towards not being damned; one outcaste of human society, who has drunk his fill of every vice has graciously condescended, for fear of hell, to accept heaven!" [The Creator and Creature, Ch v. Bk. ii. p: 264. by Dr. F. W. Faber].

Cp: the joy of the celestials when a soul from the nether regions goes to them *via* Archirâdi; and God counting that as the highest of services rendered to Him, that of His missioners saving but *one* soul.

Cp. 1. "It may be freely admitted that the sentiment of reverence is really homogeneous, whether it be directed upon simply human excellence far above our own, or upon the highest of all in the absolutely perfect. It was not without a true feeling that the Latins covered by the single word *pietas* the venerating affection whence springs the right attitude towards superi-

"Up the laurel-tree", used by St. Nammâzhvâr? Mârvan answered that the explanation given was, that the Saint, in the fervour of his longing to find God, cried loudly so that the cuckoos up that tall tree might hear him and carry the message to God. Amudanâr rejoined:—"But the laurel-tree in maritime regions is a spreading tree, how can it be tall?" Mârvan made haste to his Teacher Bhattar and said:—"Sire, Amudanâr says thus!". Bhattar:—"Son! we are concerned here not about the height or the breadth of trees but are concerned with the height of the Saint's amorous languishment for God, forcing him to bewail so loudly."[1] (But if thou dost demand for a botanical appropriateness also, of laurel trees growing tall at sea-side places, well we have it so from the authority of the saint himself in Tiruvâi-mozhi (v-9-6): "சேண் சினையோங்கு மரச்செழுங்கானல்").

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. VI. p. 2611. "Pôtṛi" vi-1-6].

TOPIC 105.

Self-ness is spiritual death.

'Die to oneself in order to live', it is said. *Death* here means death to the world, and *life* is life unto God. Selfness (*ahaṅkâra*) and selfishness (*mamakâra*) are the two agents of spiritual death. For example, Dhṛitarâshtra asked Sañjaya thus at the commencement of Bhagavad-Gîtâ:—

> "Ranged thus for battle on the sacred plain
> On Kurukshetra—say, Sañjaya! say
> What wrought *my* people (*mâmakâ*) and the Pâṇḍavas?"

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ors, human and divine." [A study of Religion by Dr. Martineau, Vol. I, p: 3. communicated to us by letter d: Lucknow, 22-9-1900, by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr].

1. "Oh! I could cry, that all the world might hear,"
[Madame Guyon.]

Bhattar meant to say that it was not *botany* but *doxology* that they were concerned about; and hence Amudanâr's question was bad taste.

Wherein, thus, he made an invidious distinction between his *own sons* and his brother's sons the Pâṇḍavas, shewing that the notion of "mine" reigned supreme in his heart. Ṣiriyâttân used to say that this distinction of 'mine' and "not mine" eventually led to the destruction of Dhritarâshtra's race.[1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. VI. p. 2660. "Minniḍai" vi-2-1].

TOPIC 106.

Secrets between God and His Saints.

God has secrets with his saints. Saint Nammâzhvâr, in his extatic intercourse with God, exclaimed:—"Lord, sportest Thou with me by telling me of secrets (of previous union)?" On this, a few disciples asked Embâr: "What are the secrets, Sire, which the Lord spoke to the Saint?. He replied:—"When the Saint himself who was illumined of God, has pronounced them as *secrets*, how can ye expect *me to know them*?"[2]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VI: p: 2698. "Kanmam" vi-2-7].

1. (*a*) Cp: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me shall find it."

[Matt: x-39].

(*b*) The love of self is more hurtful to the soul than the united power of the world." [P. 231, Ch: xx. Bk. iii. Imit: Chr: by Tho: à Kempis].

2. Cp: (*a*) "Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame."

[Madame Guyon.]

(*b*) "In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude,
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a spouse unknown
Who hides me here from envious eyes
From all intrusion and surprise."

[Ibid].

(*c*) "He (St. Francis Assisi) with fear disclosed to them this wonderful vision, but added that several things had been manifested to him in it, which he would never discover to any one; secrets, says St. Bonaventure, which perhaps could

TOPIC 107.

The sports of Lord Krishṇa.

The shepherdesses of Bṛindâvan came to Yaṣoda, Lord Krishṇas' mother, complaining to her that their butter was stolen by some one. On hearing this, Child Kṛishṇa would immediately cry as if to plead that *he* did not steal, thus by his own unbidden cry betraying himself as the Urchin Thief. (This is one of the many infant-sports of the Lord) [1]. It appears that once the residents of Râmânuja's monastery asked among themselves as to who should clean and water the monastery. They decided that the unlearned among them should be detailed for this menial service. He who was the unlearned among them immediately cried (though no body said he was the unlearned): "Sirs, how can I clean so big a place as this?!"

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2720 "Âyçhhi" vi-2-11.]

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not be expressed by words, or which men, who are not supernaturally enlightened, are not capable of understanding." [P. 136 vol. x. Butler's Lives of Saints].

(*d*) "Things have passed between us; secret relationships are established; fond ties are knitted; thrilling endearments have been exchanged; there are memories of forgivenesses full of tenderness, and memories of punishments even yet more full of sweetness and of love; there have been words said, which could never mean to others what they meant to us; there have been works which needed not words and were more than words; there have been pressures of the hand years ago, but which tingle yet; there are countless silent covenants between us; and with it all, such a conviction of his fidelity! so that it is true to each one of us beyond our neighbours." [Dr. F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature. p-80].

1. Vide Topic 16 and its foot notes. In addition to the vituperations of all the Christian Missionaries born, against the character of Lord Krishna, the Calcutta weekly called the Epiphany has now taken the field. As against this the reader is referred to the splendid 'Defence of Hinduism' by Annie Besant in the central Hindu College Magazine Vol. I. Col. Kennedy's Defence of the Puranas in Wilson's Vishnu Purâṇa; and Griffith's notes in his Vâlmîki Râmâyaṇa. In the Bible itself, God does acts such as: 'the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth &c,.'

[1 Kings xxii-23].

TOPIC 108.

To Saints, all things remind of God.

There is nothing in God's Universe which to a saint looks worthy of hate. For to him God is everywhere, and everything of His Universe is worthy of love. It is chronicled here that once two sages Ṣrî Ṣênâpati Dâsar and Nallâr both travelled together to the Holy Hill of Tirupati. On the way Dâsar took up his stick and beat the bushes (to clear the way). Upon which his friend Nallâr said:—"Comrade, how hath this bush offended thee? Neither hath it stood in the way of thy earning riches, nor of thy compassing for other selfish ends. (Wealth and lust beget hate and other evils). Why then dost thou punish this innocent God's bush?."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2734. "Kanḍavinbam" vi-3-2].

TOPIC 109.

How to embrace the Infinite.

In the vehemence of his love for God, and the exuberance of his rapturous union with Him, St. Nammâzhvâr felt so much

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1. (*a*) "All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impressed with sacred love!
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee;
In heaven, in earth or on the sea."

[Madame Guyon].

(*b*) "Evil I have none to fear,
All is good if Thou art near."

[Ibid].

(*c*) "Every event in history, every aspect of nature, and above all, every miracle, reminds them of the power of God."

[P: 125, The Psychology of the Saints by H. Joly].

(*d*) "And hence appears the vanity of that man who loves creatures, and attaches himself to them, instead of only loving the Creator in them." [The *spiritual combat*, by Father Lorenzo Scupoli. P. 181].

Cp: नवा अरे पत्युः कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय.

[Bri. Up: II-4-5].

accession of power pulsating through his being that it made him to exclaim :—"By the strength of my (love-inspired) tongue, I can catch and put to confusion this cloud-hued God of Discus and Conch,".[1] Bhattârya was discoursing on this passage, when one of his disciples in the audience by name Van-ḍuvaraip-Perumâḷ of Kañjanûr queried thus :—" Was it not enough to have said : " I could by my tongue put the cloud-hued God to confusion ? Why was it necessary to have added the attributes of Discus and Conch ? " To which Bhattar replied :— " (Discus and Conch typify time and space, or Infinity and Immensity, so that by no means is it possible to enclose and entrap a God of this nature ; but a Saints' love by its prodigality, if it may be so said, exceeds even these limits, so that by that comprehending love, even God, though he be infinite is encompassable). A God of time and space is like a wayward Elephant, (the Lord of the forest) roaming at liberty unrestrained and unchecked. ' Even this Elephant, I will restrain and curb ; even this Unchangeable, I will change," is what the Saint wishes to tell us, " by these attributes.

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. VI· p. 2686. " Kalakka " vi-4-9].

TOPIC 110.

Saints fitted for God alone ; miracles no wonder.

Such is the family of saints that every member of it necessarily goes in quest of God, and till He becomes possessed of Him,

1. On what Conch and Discus signify, See Yogi Pârthâsarathi Aiyangâr's Tatva-traya, p : 118 to 121 and Appendix. II thereto, pp : 233-234 ; and his English Translation of Mukunda-Mâlâ, Foot notes, pp : 3 and 4 :—" Thus our God's Discus and Conch, show Him to be the Lord of two Angels who superintend all we observe in the universe, viz., *matter* (more or less sonorous) in *motion*. Matter and motion, are, for mathematical purposes, called space and time, which mutually serve to measure each other ; for as A. Humboldt well observes, "we measure space by time, and time by space." &c., &c.

nothing will stop his progress on the way. Saints are as it were made for God, manufactured for God and destined for God. This high destiny and their aim, none and nothing can avert.[1] To illustrate how this destiny is by necessity fulfilled, the episode of Naḷa the monkey-chief (a grown saint from ages) is related. His comrade-monkeys expressed to him their great doubt as to the possibility of constructing a viaduct across the ocean by means of great rocks, boulders and whole hills brought *en masse* and rolled! "Colleagues!" he retorted, "Do you think it possible that the Lord of the universe, Râma, can be a hermit in the forests? Is it possible that His Consort—the Mother of the universe—can be carried away by the Demon Râvaṇa? Is it possible that a universal Lord (Râma) can cry like a weak person for His lost Consort? And yet, if you have in faith received these events, you need have no surprise for a bridge of hills thrown across a sea! (He who can make mountains rise, seas dry, and construct a universe, can certainly do this bit of a miracle to confound the brains of men!)[2]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI, p. 2796. "Tuvaḷil" vi-5-1].

1. Cp. (*a*) "For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son."

[Rom. viii-29].

(*b*) "The destiny of great men is decreed by a law inscribed by fate upon their temperaments, circumstances or surroundings."

[P. 27, H. Joly's Psychology of the Saints].

2. Read: Râmâyaṇa vi-22-45 ff.:—

(*a*) "Then spake the king of brooks and seas
To Raghu's son in words like these:
'Now let a wondrous task be done
By Naḷa, Viçvakarma's son,
Who, born of one of Vânar race,
Inherits by his father's grace
A share of his celestial art.
Call Naḷa to perform his part,
And he, divinely taught and skilled
A bridge athwart the sea shall build.'
"He spoke and vanished; Naḷa, best of Vânar chiefs, the King addressed:
'O'er the deep sea where monsters play
A bridge, O Râma, will I lay;
For sharer of my father's skill,
Mine is the power and mine the will."

(*b*) Here is a question of Miracles. If by Moses' hand the sea can part

TOPIC 111.

The perpetual growth of Saints' love for God.

The phrase used by St. Nammâzhvâr to express his ineffable love for God in [Tiruvâimozhi VI-5-1] "Tuvaḷil" is நின்றுகுமிறுமே (*Ninṛu kumiṛume*). This phrase can be split into *ninṛu kumiṛum*, or *ninṛu ukum iṛum*. In the court of king Vikramasimha, linguists (to parade their learning) wisely suggested the division *ukum*, *iṛum*, meaning that in his love for God, our saint would *melt* and *die*. But the king opposed this, and opined that *kumirum* meaning *whirling* was more appropriate. "For" said he, "*melting* and *dying* imply an *end* to the love, whereas for a saint of Nammâzhvâr's type, it is more appropriate to consider his love as unceasingly *whirling* like the whirlpool in a stream, boring deeper and

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[*Vide Exodus IV-21*] the Architect of the Universe, Incarnated, can certainly be the Engineer of a trifling stone-bridge over the waves!

"Certain critics of this age, as they style themselves, are displeased with all histories of miracles, not considering that these wonders are, in a particular manner, the works of God, intended to raise our attention to His Holy Providence, and to awake our souls to praise His goodness and power; often also to bear testimony to His truth."

[P: 24, Vol. I. Introductory Discourse, Butler's Lives of Saints].

(c) Says Mr. T. H. Griffith, M. A., C. I. E. [notes, 562-3 of his Vâlmîki Râmâyaṇa]:—"How could an epic so dear in India to the memory of the people, so deeply rooted for many centuries in the minds of all, so propagated and diffused through all the dialects and languages of those regions, which had become the source of many dramas which are still represented in India, which is itself represented every year with such magnificence, to such crowds of people in the neighbourhood of Ayodhya, a poem welcomed at its very birth with such favor, as the legend relates that the recitation of it by the first wandering Rhapsodists has consecrated and made famous all the places celebrated by them, and where Râma made a shorter or longer stay, how, I ask, could such an epic have been purely allegorical? How upon a pure invention, upon a single allegory, could a poem have been composed of about 50,000 verses, relating with such force and power the events, and giving details with such exactness?"

deeper, but never scattering and passing away. This circling and boring of love in the heart is mute, silent and incapable of expression, like the cow, whose calf is tethered away from her and whose teats tingle with filling milk, cannot withal express by mouth her painful longing to reach her calf." (To *melt* and *die* would put limits on the saint's love, whereas to *whirl* would make it perpetual and ever to grow.)[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI: p. 2804. "Tuvaḷil" vi-5-1]

TOPIC 112.

The Bewitching Beauty of God.

When St. Âḷavandâr (Yamunâchârya)[2] heard from Maṇakkâl Nambi the discourse about God, he said:—"There is no other way but God (to salvation). How can I see Him im-

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1. Cp: (*a*) "Flames of encircling love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis filled with sacred joy, yet press'd
With sacred sorrow too."
[Madame Guyon].

(*b*) "Love pure and holy is a deathless fire;
Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal love a God must needs inspire,
When once he wins the heart, and fits it for his praise."
[Ibid].

(*c*) तदेवरम्यंरुचिरंनवंनवं
तदेवशश्वन्मनसोमहोत्सवम् ।
तदेवशोकार्णवशोषणंनृणां
यदुत्तमश्लोकयशोनुगीयते ॥ [Bhâg: XII. 12-51]

2. For a detailed life of this King Saint, see Awakened India Vol II. 1897, p: 28 ff, 41 ff, & 55 ff: The extract bearing on the present topic runs as follows: "So he (Âḷavandâr) eagerly asked Nambi where that Treasure lay and how he might obtain it. Nambi replied, "I will show it to you if you go with me. It is between two rivers and within seven successive walls. A huge serpent guards it and a

mediatly ? "! God has but to be told; and the heart yearns to see Him. He has but to be seen; and it maketh one weep with tears of joy like St. Nammâzhvâr.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. P. 2816: "Kuzhaiyum" VI-5-5].

TOPIC 113.

How God is glorified by praise.

Gods' glory gains color when it is sung with inimitable fervour by His beloved saints, as when Saint Bhattârya did sweetly ejaculate the Holy Name: "Azhagia-maṇavâlap-Perumâḷ"= "Lovely Spouse"; as when Sômâsiy-ândân did entone the Holy name: "Emberumânâr"=" My own Lord (an epithet of

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Râkshasa from the south sea comes and visits it once in twelve years It has been laid in by a *mantra* and it can be recovered only by means of that secret *mantra* and with the help of a peculiar herb of rare virtues, and not by means of mere animal sacrifices like other ordinary treasures. It is a very vast Treasure and by obtaining it you will become much richer than any other thing on earth. By securing it you can easily vanquish all your enemies, and no one can ever defeat you. It is a great legacy which your celebrated grand-father Nâthamuni Svâmi has left you out of love. Pray take hold of it and deliver me from my responsibility." Âḷavandâr asked: "Is it so valuable and vast a Treasure?" And said, "How good of my grandfather! and how good of you not to have appropriated it yourself but kept the Trust! I shall start immediately with my army." [P. 42.] Also see the Vaishnavite Vol I.

1. Cp. (*a*) Oh, Thou, once beheld, we ne'er forget,
Reveal Thy love, and banish all my fears."

[Madame Guyon].

(*b*) "Devotion to Divine Men is not a matter for discussion or for argument; the moment One of Them is seen by the inner vision, the heart rushes out to Him and falls unbidden at His Feet."

[P. 236. Theos: Rev: The Value of Devotion by Annie Besant.]

(*c*) "The attractions of the increated Beauty, and eternal goodness, are infinitely sweet and amiable; yet at the same time they are so powerful, efficacious, and so completely engage the attention of the mind, that they seem not only to fascinate, but even to ravish, and carry the soul beyond her natural limits. [P. 262. Ch: iv. Bk, vii, St. Fr: de Sale's Love of God].

Râmânuja)"; as when Anandâzhvân did anthem the Holy Name "Tiru-vêngadam-udaiyân "= the Lord of the Holy Hill of Tirupati.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. P. 2822: "Annaimîr" vi-5-7].

TOPIC 114.

A love-comparison between two saints.

Saint Âlavandâr, when conducting an exposition of the relative merits of Saint Nammâzhvâr and Saint Tiru-mangaiy-Âzhvâr, in the sphere of Love to God, asked his audience: "Which of these two saints have we more cause to fear, the saint who sang: "Thou, Lord, art my food &c." [T. V. M. vi-7] or the saint who sang: "O, the Thief, He hath stolen my soul away." [Tirumozhi iii—7] ?". They replied:—" Certainly we have to fear for the former viz., Saint Nammâzhvâr; for his state is one of precipitate flight, alone and *companionless*, to the shrine of Tirukkôlûr, where he hopes to meet His Lord; whereas the latter, viz., Saint Tirumangaiy-Âzhvâr is already in *company* with his Lord of Tiruvâli. Our sympathies must be certainly with those who are still lonely, not with those who have found company with God." "But I think otherwise, Sons!", Returned Âlavandâr; "My opinion is that we have more reason to fear for the state in which we find Tirumangai-Âzhvâr. For here the lover and his Spouse are *in copmany*. Thus they are delirious

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1. Cp. (*a*) " He (St. Francis Assisi) was accustomed to recite our Lord's Prayer very slowly with singular gust in each petition, and in every word. The doxology: *Glory be to the Father* &c., was a beloved aspiration of this saint, who would repeat it often together at work, and at other times, with extraordinary devotion, and he advised others to use the same. A certain lay-brother once asking him leave to study, the saint said to him: "Repeat assiduously the doxology, *Glory be to the Father* &c., and you will become very learned in the eyes of God." [Vol X. P: 115. *Butler's Lives of Saints*.]

together in the rapturous reciprocations of ravishing love. Hence our saint, immersed as he is in fathomless depths of love, is in the most criticalstate of becoming unconscious and falling into a state of stupor such as those who, dosing themselves with datura-narcotic, may be said to fall into ! Hence the plight of this inebriated Saint excites more our fear. Whereas the other Saint Nammâzhvâr is yet in the state of hot pursuit after God. He is thus yet lonely and conscious of his individual self. He is yet not intoxicated to self-oblivion. The energy flowing from a mind, full-strong with the ardent expectation of meeting his Bride-groom and Beloved companion, still sustains him and keeps him alive. So we have no need to fear him yet, as the other saint whom we find drowned in love and therefore needing help ! "[1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. VI. p. 2865. " Uṇṇuñjôru " vi-7-1].

TOPIC 115.

Visible signs of love to God.

Practice has more effect than precept. We need no lengthy lectures from learned men. It is enough to witness a saint in his moments of rapturous ravishment in union with his God,—moments when his whole being thrills with love, and his eyes swim with pearls of tears of delight. " Blessed be such saints ! " Nañjîyar used to say :—" Thrice did I go over the Love-Treatise of Tiruvâimozhi with Tirunaṟaiyûr-Aṟaiyar, but none of the teachings did affect and melt my heart so much as when I actually witnessed him, once when explaining a certain passage, transported with raptures of Divine emotion,

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1. Cp : " Oh glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought;
On an ocean of Deity toss'd,
I am swallow'd, I sink into nought."
[Madame Guyon.]

finding vent in the shape of melting tears."[1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. VI, p. 2872. " Uṇṇuñjôṛu " vi-8-1].

TOPIC 116.

Love for God's Abodes.

"Where could we witness such saints?" In all Holy Lands may they be. Tirukkôḷûr was such a Land. A resident of this place had left it and had employed himself in tilling the land in an out of the way place called Ṣôzha-kulântaka. Anandâzhvân, a great devotee, finding this man so employed, inquired :— " What is thy native town ? "

Man :—" (The Holy Place) Tirukkôḷûr."

Devotee : Then why didst thou leave it ? "

Man : " I had to leave it in order to gain a living."

Devotee. " Rather than forsake a Holy Land where thy Eternal Living (God) dwells, better thou hadst tarried there even if thou hadst there to graze asses, by the wherewithal to tend thy carcase ! "

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. V.I. p. 2872. " Uṇṇuñjôṛu " vi-7-1].

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1. Cp. (a) " श्रुतमप्यौपानिषदं दूरे हरिकथामृतात्
यन्न सन्ति द्रवाच्चित्तप्रेमाशृपुळकोद्गमाः ॥ "

i.e. ' Even God science such as that of the Upanishads is remote from the ambrosia of Hari's, narratives, if it fails to melt the heart, wet the eye, and thrill the frame."

[Mahâbhâ].'

(b) " कथं विना रोमहर्षं द्रवता चेतसा विना ।
विनानन्दाशृकलया शुद्ध्येद्भक्त्या विनाशयः "

" How love to God—unattended with frame-thrilling, heart-dissolving, and eye raining tears of joy—can purify the soul ? "

[Bhâg : Pur : xi-14-28].

[continued.]

TOPIC 117.

Attachment to God's Abodes.

Once Râmânuja was journeying southwards (from Ṣrî-raṅgam towards Tirukkôḷûr, the Holy Place). He saw a damsel coming from Tirukkôḷûr.

" Where dost thou come from ? "

" From Holy Tirukkôḷûr."

" What, is it possible for people who have once taken their abode in such a Holy Place to leave it again ? ", exclaimed Râmânuja in surprize.[1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk. VI. p. 2875. " Uṇṇuñjoṛu " vi-7-1].

(c) "वाग्गद्गदाद्रवतेयस्याचित्तंहसत्यभीक्ष्णंरुदतिक्वचिच्च ।
विलज्जउद्गायतिनृत्यतेचमद्भक्तियुक्तोभुवनंपुनाति॥ "

" That lover of Mine saves the world whose voice becomes choked, whose heart softens, who laughs and cries by turns, and unconcerned sings and dances."

[Bhâg : Pur : xi-14-24].

(d) Read the Life of Gauraṅga, of Venkatâdri-svâmi and many other God-lovers mentioned in Part II of our Lectures on Ecstasy &c.

(e) " Whilst he (Thomas Aquino) was preaching on Good Friday on the love of God for man, and our ingratitude to him, his whole audience melted into tears to such a degree, that he was obliged to stop several times."

[P. 69. Vol iii. Butler's Lives of Saints.]

(f) He whose heart is dull to Divine Love is thus described :—

" तदश्मसारंहृदयंबतेदं
यद्गृह्यमाणैर्हरिनामधेयैः ।
नविक्रियेताथमुखेविकारो
नेत्रेजलंगात्ररुहेषुहर्षः ॥ " [Bhâg : Pur : ii-3-24].

1. Reasons for desertion given by the Holy Damsel are 81. These must be post-poned to another book. It is called : *Tiru-kkôḷûr-Ammai Rahasyam.*

TOPIC 118.

The world as God-abidant and as God forsaken.

To saints, the utterance of the Holy Name of God is so preciously sweet that they imagine the whole world sings forth the Name like themselves. To them, when the world seems to be full of God, and seems as if its vast board is reverberating with their own Divine sentiment, it is acceptable; otherwise it is detestable. This truth is embodied in the following dialogue:—

Peṭṛi queried Nambiḷḷai :—" Holy Sire! Why could not St. Nammâzhvâr imagine his articles of sport such as the ball, the flower-basket &c., as chanting forth God's Holy name [1], just as he imagined the whole world chanting forth? And therefore the Saint need not have abandoned these articles as Godless?"

Nambiḷḷai :—" Not so, son! Firstly when the St. said 'world', it meant the intelligent beings who inhabit the world; whereas no idea of intelligence is conveyed by the articles flower-basket &c. Secondly, when anything is found destitute of God, it must be resigned, howmuchsoever otherwise it might appear to give joy, just like the Kingdom of Ayodhya itself appearing detestable to Bharata, when destitute of Râma.[2]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2883. " Pûvai " vi-7-3].

1. (a) The Holy Name here alluded to, when translated, is nearly thus: " Lord of Mercy! or O Merciful Justice", symbolized as Ṣrî and Vishṇu or Mother-Father (*Tirumâl*) (b) Dr. F. W. Faber writes:— " See how Mercy and Justice (= Lakshmi-Nârâyaṇa) mingle with and magnify each other, how they put on each other's look, and fill each other's offices." [P: 411-412, Ch: iv Bk. iii; The Creator and the Creature."]

(b) " Nothing can be more perfect than the union between strength and sweetness, in the operations of grace. These two inseparable qualities act in concert, to enable us to do good. Strength is tempered by sweetness, and sweetness is supported by strength. One stimulates, the other persuades; so that the soul is at once powerfully assisted, and strongly supported." [Fr: de Sale's Love of God p: 78. Ch: xii. Bk: ii].

2. Kaikeyî and her son Bharata:—*Kaikeyi*:—

TOPIC 119.

All who are Godly are Worship-Worthy.

Even our disciples, our own children, are worthy of worship when they become God's own.[1] One day Nañjîyar led his disciple Nambiḷḷai to the Holy Assembly, and in their presence and hearing, loudly acclaimed the praises of his disciple. Guessing however that the Assembly might wrongly construe his conduct, he addressed them thus:—"Brothers! Have no opinion about my lauding my own disciple in the public. For, has not St. Tirumaṅgaiy-Âzhvâr sung: "How can I look upon the (spiritual) son, who goes to worship the Lord of Tirukkaṇṇapuram, as my (bodily) son?[2] [Tirumozhi: vii-2-9].

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2911. "Kâriyam" vi-7-9].

TOPIC 120.

Worthiness makes no distinctions.

Ammuṇiy-âzhvâr used to prostrate to his own disciple. When questioned as to the reasonableness of this procedure, he

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"Up then most dutiful! maintain
The royal state, arise, and reign
* * * *
This town and realm are all thine own." *Bharata*:—
"Quick panting like a serpent maimed.
He fell to earth with rage inflamed." [Râmâyaṇa.]

1. (*a*) Read the story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, [John xiii].

(*b*) Jesus, pointing to his disciples said:—"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, sister, and mother" [Matt: xii-50]

2. Read the account of Devahûti and her saintly son Kapila, whose disciple she became. [Bhâg: 3rd Skandha: 25th Chapter].

She prays to her son-Teacher thus:—

अथमेदेव!संमोहमपाक्रष्टुंत्वमर्हसि ।
योवग्रहोहंममेतीत्येतस्मिन्योजितस्त्वया ॥
तंत्वागताहंशरणंशरण्यंस्वभृत्यसंसारतरोःकुठारं ।
जिज्ञासयाहंप्रकृतेःपूरुषस्यनमामिसद्धर्मविदांवरिष्ठं ॥

said :—"If they be any others than my own disciple, I have need to know them first and learn that they are worthy to receive such an homage; but as regards my own disciple I have no need to make such a scrutiny, nor have scruples as by long acquaintance and association he is proved worthy of worship!

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2911. "Kâriyam" vi-7-9].

TOPIC 121.

Powers of salvation vested in saints—a token of God's love.

God's love for his creatures is so great that he gives his own saints to them, endowed with the powers of salvation. Aruḷâḷap-perumâḷ-Embarumânâr, the disciple of Râmânuja, was on his death-bed. Kûratt-âzhvân with Piḷḷaiy-uṛangâ-villi-Dâsar (intimate disciples of Râmânuja and on whom therefore Emberumânâr looked as his saviours) proceeded to him on a visit. Seeing them, he said to Âzhvân: "The remembrance of your not doing me a favour, I can dispel only after I join the Holy feet of Aḷavandâr in Heaven." The reference here is to a request made by Emberumânâr to Kûratt-âzhvân to plead for him with Lord Raṅganâtha to take him to Heaven soon. But Âzhvân did not do so. Reference to Âḷavandâr in Heaven instead of Râmânuja himself who was still living on earth, was out of respect for the latter; moreover Âḷavandâr being the Master of Râmânuja, reference to one as to the other is spiritually equally valid.

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2927. "Ponnulaku" vi-8-1].

TOPIC 122.

The virtue of confession and mediation

The principle of mediation and confession is thus: By mediation, effected by the God's elect, God's absence from man is

converted into His presence; in other words, His detachment from us is changed to attachment; like the mango-story of the Mahâbhârata, it is said. Lord Krishṇa and His dear companions, Arjuna and others, were once strolling in the woods and went to the shade of a mango tree for rest. Arjuna aimed at a mango fruit and let it fall. Lord Krishṇa cried:—"The fruit is food for the ascetic saints (Rishis) who dwell here. They may curse thee." Then all the Pâṇḍavas tremblingly asked:—"How shall we get this mango to attach itself again to the tree?". "By you all disclosing your inmost secrets to Me", the Lord returned. Then they all opened their hearts, and even Draupadi was constrained to reveal how her heart hankered after a sixth husband (Karṇa) though she had already the Pâṇḍavas five. After this the detached mango got itself attached. So do our souls get purged by confession to Godly souls and are made clean to go to God.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 2953. "Tûmadu" vi-8-4].

TOPIC 123.

The debt of protection due to Refugees.

When saint Aruḷâḷap-perumâḷ-Emberumânâr was about to wing his flight to the Abodes of the Blessed, some disciples at his bed-side reverently inquired what was passing in his mind. To which he said:—"I was meditating on the event of a simple bird (the dove) causing grief to Lord Râma's heart." The allusion is as follows:—

1. "Amen I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." Matt: xviii-18].

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." [John: xx-23].

Râma reasoned thus with Sugrîva (the Vânar king) when the latter would not let in Vibhîshaṇa, anxiously waiting outside to pay his obeisance to Râma:—

" And can I, Vânar King ! forget
The great, the universal debt,
Ever to aid and welcome those
Who pray for shelter, friends or foes ?
Hast thou not heard the deathless praise
Won by the dove in olden days,
Who conquering his fear and hate
Welcomed the slayer of his mate,
And gave a banquet,—to refresh
The weary fowler,—of his flesh ?

[Râmâyaṇa vi-18-24ff].

Nambiḷḷai used to explain the purport of this to be thus:— " That once we have in faith confided our self-will unto the keeping of God (as Vibhîshaṇa did to Lord Râma), this act has spiritual power sufficient to safely carry us on to the very acme of spiritual eminence. Nothing needs be done on our side. For God, our Refuge, taketh up the work of our salvation after our surrender, for such is His Perfection, Glory and Grace, on which we have but to implicitly rely. (We need not even bend a blade of grass for our salvation, for the work is entrusted to the Almighty).[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI p. 2966 " Enminnu " vi-8-6].

TOPIC 124.

God Manifest in Images.

Of the five-fold manifestations of God, the Manifestation Worshippable, or God present in Images is one which purposely

1. This does not mean an indifferent or a mere non-militant frame of mind, but one of friendly inclination to God, in love. But read Topic 128-*infra*.

hides His Transcendant nature, that thus He may suit and be acceptable to the weak and ignorant state of His worshippers. In this Manifestation, God, out of His condescension, choses to will that He seem entirely in the hands of His worshippers, hiding His omniscience and omnipotence, or seeming the very reverse of these in his worshippers' hands.[1] God Supreme is experienced in His symbols made of wood, stone &c., only by saints of extraordinary faith and fervour.[2] A devotee—a

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1. Vide: the learned Translation of Tatva-Traya by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr, in this connection, pp: 143 ff. I give a few extracts only:—60 "The Manifestation Worshippable (Archâvatâra), is that Form of the Lord, in which, unlike His Manifestation Distinctive, * * the Lord * * * is pleased without any kind of limitation as to times, places, or persons, to be present and manifest Himself to all, in temples and homes, to wink at faults, and to be, for every movement or business, dependent on the worshipper." 62. "Though appearing with the true Relation of Proprietor and Property reversed, and in the character of something devoid of knowledge, power or liberty, the Lord, in this Incarnation, is pleased, out of His Infinite Mercy, to confer on His devotees, every needful boon."

"Who, God can see in flesh and bone,
He, God can see in wood and stone;
Who *can't* see God in wood and stone;
He can't see God in flesh and bone."

Cardinal Newman(St.) uses the following significant language in his Meditations and Devotions: Part iii: Bk: x, p: 511:—"And it is love, which keeps Thee here still,] even now that Thou hast ascended on high, in a small tabernacle, and under cheap and common outward forms. O *Amor Meus*, if Thou wert not infinite Love, wouldst Thou remain here, one hour, imprisoned and exposed to slight, indignity and insult?" (Cp: Bhattar's Hymn to Lord Ranganâtha) II-74: *Âstânte*."

Cp: "Since all things are the manifestors of Being,
One amongst them must be an Idol.
If the polytheist only knew what idols are,
How would he be wrong in his religion?"

[Gulshân-i-Râz].

Read Pp: 236 of Max Muller's Six Systems of Philosophy; "On Idolatry, a necessity of our nature." Also read Pp: 216. ff of our *Holy Lives of Drâvida Saints*.

2. "For, Amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain,: Remove from hence thither: and it shall remove."

[Matt: xvii-1-9

Viṇṇappam-Ṣeyvâr—carried about him his nut-wallet with him; and in it he had kept his Sâlagram-image as his constant companion. When by accident, the tiny marble-like image, mixed up with the nut (which he ate), entered his mouth, he would feel the hardness of the marble differing of course from the nut. He would then reverently take it out, wash it in water he had in his vessel, dry it with his robe, dress it, and taking cymbals in his hand sing a song of praise from St. Nammâzhvâr and then lull it to sleep again in his nut-wallet. This confusion often happened with him. A Vaishṇava of the ritual type (more than of love to God) often observed this, to him blasphemous, proceeding of Ṣeyvâr; and not containing himself any longer, burst out: "Sire, will you deign to present me with your (desecrated) marble-God?" "Most gladly", he said, and transferred his Holy Property. The Vaishṇava took it home, and worshipped it in all the strict detail of ceremonial worship, enjoined for such occasions. The Image appeared to him in his dream and spoke thus:—"Fool, I was happy in the temple of my Ṣeyvâr's nut-wallet,—Ṣeyvâr to whom St. Nammâzhvâr's Holy Chant, Tiruvâimozhi, is his life and soul. I had the felicity of becoming bathed in the nectar-like saliva of his holy mouth. I had too the delight of listening to the sweet canticles from St. Âzhvâr's, which he warbled to me. But thou hast deprived Me of all this happiness and subjectest me to all the tedious trials of thy formal worship. The Vaishṇava was by this dream put into great trepidation. He ran to Ṣeyvâr forthwith and restored to him his dear Sâlagrâma. [1]

[Bhag. Vish: Bk VI, P 2981. "Vandirundu"]

1. Op: Matt: xv. Scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus:—"why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." To which Jesus said:—"Hypocrites, 'This people honoureth me with their lips: but their

TOPIC 125.

The Superiority over all else of Eternal Bliss.

Tirukkurugaip-pirân Piḷḷân (the author of the 6,000 commentary on St. Nammâzhvâr's Tiruvâymozhi) was preparing for his final exit from this world, when Nañjîyar went to him on a visit to inquire of his health. He found Piḷḷân ardently and often repeating from St. Nammâzhvâr, the passage: "When will my painful sojourn on earth terminate?". [Âvi: vi-9-9]. On hearing this, Nañjîyar broke out into a sobbing (at the thought that his beloved Elder was passing for ever away from their midst), when Piḷḷân called him to order by saying:—"Alas! Jîyar! what movest thee so to tears? Dost thou really imagine that the bliss of Heaven is inferior to our sojourn here?" [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. P: 3025, "Âvi" vi,-9-9].

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heart is far from me. And in vain doth worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men." Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

(a) On Image worship, read (a) the Holy Bible: Exod: xxv-18; Num. xxi-8-9. Exod. xxxvii-7. Paralipo, xxviii-18; Heb. xi-21; 2 Kings, vi-12-16; Psalm: xcviii-5; Phil. ii-10. (b) Also read Rev: J. Meurin's Defence of Holy Images, (Bombay). (c) The Rev: E. L. Rexford D. D. of Boston says:—"And assuredly the Great Spirit who works through all forms and who makes all things His ministers, can make the rudest image a medium through which He will approach His child." [P. 520. Vol.I History of the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago].

(b) "Our Bhâshyakâra (Râmânuja) once examined a disciple, by making the latter go through in his blessed presence, the form of worship, known as *Nityam*. The pupil went through every detail without the slightest deviation from what he had been taught. But lo! instead of praise he got only a scolding for the exactness of his conformity, our Bhâshyakâra observing:—"Stiff-hearted, surely, thou must be, O my good friend!

The Lord's High Presence. thee doth no confusion send."

[Pârthasârathi Yogi's letter to us dated 13-7-1902].

1. Equivalent to: "Woe is me, that my pilgrimage is prolonged", of the Bible. 2, Read Thomas á Kempis *Imit*: *Chr*: Ch: xxxvii. Bk:—"Is the gain or loss of the Kingdom of God an alternative of no importance?"

TOPIC 126.

At God's bidding, enemies turn friends.

When God wills, even enemies turn friends, oppressors are converted into protectors. Garuḍa is the tribal enemy, for instance, of the serpent-race. One Sumukha of this race sought Vishṇu's refuge and protection against the fearful raids of Garuḍa. Vishṇu promised protection, and calling Garuḍa himself, the racial enemy, consigned Sumukha to his care. Garuḍa had thus to lay aside his enmity and befriend Sumukha.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VI: P. 3041. "Ulakam" vi-10-1].

TOPIC 127.

God and His Holy Church form one body, and discharge the function of Salvation.

Nambiḷḷai raised this question one day with his Master Nañjîyar:—"Holy Sire! there are Four Ways[2] mentioned to lead to Final Liberation; and they say there is a Fifth. Is there anything like it in the world?" Quoth Nañjîyar:—"My son! I am not aware of a Fifth. The Fourth Way is His Grace, the Almighty Himself. If a Fifth be mentioned again as an *Independent* Way, it would be as absurd as if one

1. (*a*) [Vide Mahâbhâ: *Udyôga Parva*. Engl: Edtn: by Pratâpa Chandr Roy. Pp: 312 ff.]

(*b*) Cp: *Tiru-viruttam*: verse 27:—*Sêmam* &c.

2. On the Four Ways to Salvation, consult P. 573, *Table*, appended to *Eng*: *Trans*: of our *Bh*: *Gî*, *Râmânuja Bhâshya*. The Four Ways referred to are:—(1) *Karma*, (2) *Jñâna*, (3) *Bhakti*, (4) *Prapatti* (5) *Âchârya-âbhimâna*; the last, though classed as Fifth is really included under the Fourth. Thus it is written in Sri-Vachana-Bhûshaṇa *or the Word-Jewel*, [Engl: Fr: by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi].

"Resort to God like winning boons,
After kissing the boon-granter's *hand*;
Faith in Teacher's like winning boons
After kissing the boon-granter's *foot*."

should interpret the Taittirîya Upanishad passage: "The etheric space of the heart, and what is therein," [1] to mean that "etheric space" is Nârâyaṇa, and "what is therein" as Rudra. So I am not aware of an Independent Fifth, surpassing the Fourth (inasmuch as all Âchâryas constitute members of the One God-head, and constitute His body).[2]

"But, put in Nambiḷḷai, what does St, Nammâzhvâr mean, when he asks God to show him a Way, in his Holy song: "Âvâv-ennâdu" [vi-10-4]," as if another Way than God Himself, existed? To which Nañjîyar replied:—"This question is suggested by thy ignorance. The meaning of the passage is this:—"My God! when thou dost exist, is it possible I can pant like this? It seemeth as if there is a remedy besides Thyself to heal my wounds! If so, show it." [This shows that the Saint's languishing for God's coming is so great that every moment of delay or pause in His approach, the Saint construed into a doubt whether God did exist at all; a doubt arising merely from his feeling of great impatience. For, doth not the very fact of the Saint supplicating Him to show a Way of Salvation tacitly admit His Existence? And the asking Him to point to a way of Salvation is really indirectly asking that He Himself be the Way and unto Himself.]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VI. P: 3155." Âvâv-ennâdu" VI. 10-4.]

1. The text is:—" तत्रापिदहरंगगनंतस्मिन्यदन्तः॥ "

2. Cp: "If the feet and hands had each an individual will, they could never be at rest save by subjecting that will to the main will which rules the whole body. Without that they would be in perpetual disorder and mishap; but seeking only the welfare of the whole body each attains its own individual needs." [Lear's Selections from Pascal's Thoughts. P: 172.]

TOPIC 128.

Our free-will inclining to God's grace is itself an act of His Grace.

A disciple of Nañjîyar proposed the following question :—"Holy Sire! If God is our only Way (or Means) for salvation, then there is nothing for us to do? Why should you then inculcate a something yet as necessary on our part, even such as the act of surrender to God,—an act plainly indicative of something done by us to God from out of our own free-will?" At this question, Nânjîyar closed his ears as if he heard something blasphemous and exclaimed :—"Alas! that I should have disclosed to thee this Sacred Truth of resignation to God (*Prapatti*), handed down as a most Holy Legacy from our Saint Nâthamunigal downward to my own immediate Spiritual Preceptor—a Truth uniformly revealed by one Saint after another in unbroken succession." So saying he smote his forehead, angered and chagrined, and forthwith retired into his private chamber. His heart was moved with both sorrow and pity at the obduracy of men's hearts in not receiving and understanding the spirit of such truths.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 3055 'Âvâv-ennâthu' vi-10-4].

TOPIC 129.

The sign of Godliness and Ungodliness.

"By one sign we can recognize whether we are godly or ungodly," taught Nañjîyar; "*i.e.*, when any ill befalls others, see if our hearts do then move to compassionate them,

1. The gist of this saying is that unless man first inclines to God,—in other words makes use of his free-will to incline of its own free-choice Godward, God's saving grace would be inoperative. Cp: "Let us revert to the birds mentioned by Aristotle; the wind raises them, but will not enable them to proceed far unless by extending their wings, balancing their bodies and plunging into the air, they second the power of the breeze; if attracted by the appearance of some verdant spot, or benumbed from having lain a long time motionless, they neglect

or not; *i.e.*, whether our hearts condole their sufferings or gloat over them. In the former case, we may console ourselves as related to God; in the latter as cast from Him. We can thus be our own friends or foes as we choose."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VI. p. 3056. "Âvâv-ennâtdu" vi-10-4].

TOPIC 130.

The Perversity of our free-will resisting the free operation of God's grace.

If the relation between creatures and the Creator as children and Mother respectively, be considered, it would appear as if God stands responsible for everything that may befall the creature. If a child for instance should fall into a well, they would impute the act to the mother's carelessness, in not having kept a watchful eye upon the child. Thus if the crea-

to profit by the rising breeze and fall again to the ground, they may indeed be said to have felt the wind, but it has been useless to them, because they failed to profit by the facility it afforded them for flying."

"Thus, we are aroused or excited by the inspirations of grace; in following their attractions, we co-operate with or second their power; but, by refusing our consent, we reject them. The voice of grace can speak to our hearts without our concurrence; but our co-operation is necessary for yielding to its inspirations." [Pp: 78-79. Fr: de: Sale's Love of God. Ch: xii. Bk. ii].

"God never refuses his divine assistance to those who prove their desire to advance in the path of perfect charity." [Ibid; P: 45, Ch. xviii, Bk. i].

"I do not see," says St. Theresa, "how God can come to us, or enrich us with His graces, if we shut the door against him. Though He is infinitely desirous to communicate Himself to us with all His gifts, He will have our hearts to be found disengaged, alone, and burning with a desire to receive Him." [P: 404 Vol: x, Butler's Lives of Saints].

Vide, Topic 123 and ft. note, *supra*. If the attitude of the heart be not one of opposition to God, or even be not one of indifference, it ought to be one of loving, yielding to the operations of Grace. This attitude is itself a gift of His Grace Vide also Topic 130 *infra* treating of the perversity of our free-will.

Read *Sri: Vachana-bhûshana* Sentences 66 ff [Engl:Trans].

1. (*a*) See Bh: Gi: xvi-1, 2, 3, and its comments by Râmânujâ: [our Engl: Trans:]

ture goes wrong, it seems evident that the Creator, our Mother, neglected it. Rishi Udaṅka came to Lord Krishṇa, and queried him thus :—" Both the parties (Kurus and Pâṇḍus) are equal to Thee, Lord! and yet Thou hast caused the destruction of the Kurus—viz., Duryodhana and his party,—whereas Thy treatment of the Pâṇḍus has been quite the opposite! How canst Thou be thus partial?" Lord Krishṇa gave a series of reasons for His preference for one party as against the other and ended by pointing out to Udaṅka that Duryodhana and his party were found obstinately averse to all righteousness, despite His indefatigable efforts, by every means in His power, to turn them from their evil ways; and that they had a perversity of will which would listen to no kind of persuasion. To this Udaṅka retaliated again :—" But Thou, Lord, couldst certainly have predisposed them also for righteousness!!." [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VII. P: 3121: " Uḷ-nilâviya " vii-1-1]

(b) also Ibid vi-32. Râmânujâ's comment on this is quoted here at length from the work above quoted, for the benefit of the reader:—" Knowing thus that âtma (soul) has no connection with happiness or misery, he (the saint or Godly man) looks the same on one as on the other, whether they befall him or befall others;—happiness or joy in the shape of a son being born, (for example); and misery or grief in the shape of that son dying, (for example)." In other words, to the godly man, the joy to others causes joy in him, and grief to others causes him grief. His heart to others' felicity or misfortune is the same as when these should fall to his own lot. [P: 210 our Engl: Trans].

1. Vide Topics. 123 & 128. *Supra.*

Cp. (a) "He (St. Augustine) proves in the 9th Chapter, ('the City of God'] that charity was infused into the angels at their creation; and he adds, as a probability, that they all received an equal degree of grace. He then asks, why some of them have not only persevered, but even attained a great degree of glory, while others, on the contrary, rejected the graces given them, consented to sin, and thereby incurred eternal damnation? To which he replies, that the only reason which can be alleged for it is, that they first maintained themselves in the state of charity by the grace of their Creator, and that the second forfeited their state of sanctity through their own perverse will." [St. Fr: de Sale's Love of God p: 71-7

TOPIC 131.

Heart's Grateful Mood—the Result of God's Grace.

Even to get into an attitude of mind, feeling thankful to God for the manifold mercies which he lavishes on His creatures, is possible only after the operation of a Sovereign act of God's grace.[1] For even saints who were keenly alive to this grateful attitude of mind, sometimes ran into a mood when they complained of God as not having done to them everything that they desired. Not satisfied with interior heavenly sweetness, for example, with which God dowered St. Nammâzhvâr in great abundance, he yet complained that what he felt interiorly was not confirmed by exterior sensible experiences. Rudra, it is related, was not satisfied with food offered him by a devotee of his, and he asked for more. The story goes to this effect:—

Ch: x. Bk. ii].

(b) Also read *Ch*: *V*: *Bk*: *IV*. entitled: "The Privation, as well as the Decrease of Charity, proceeds entirely from the perverted will of the creature."

(c) Also read the *Ultimate Conclusions*, at the End of Bk: iv, of the Golden Book entitled: "*Âchârya-hṛidaya*" by Azhagiá maṇavâḷap-perumâl Nâyanâr, the Holy Brother of Piḷḷai Lôkâchârya, the Author of "Sri Vachana-Bhûshaṇa." The details of Udaṅka's (Bhṛigu's son) episode is found in Mahâbhârata, Asvamedha Parva, Ch: 53 ff.

1. Cp: (a) "I know, indeed, and confess that of myself I am not able to render Thee due thanks and praise for Thy smallest benefits; for I am less than the least of all Thy mercies; and when I attempt to contemplate Thy excellent majesty, my spirit fails, unable to sustain the vast idea." [Thomas à Kempis: Imit: Chr. Ch: xvi. Bk. iii].

(b) "What bonds of gratitude I feel
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove.
To return Thee love for love"

[Madame Guyon].

(c) "Among other things, He has thought of making you take good resolutions to love and serve Him."

[Ch: II. "Consoling thoughts" by Fr. de Sales.]

(d) "For, without the grace of God, we cannot even have a good thought" [p: 148. Happiness of Heaven by Rev. F. J. Boudreaux.]

There was one by name Ṣiru-ṭṭoṇḍan in the old days. Rudra disguised himself like a beggar and came to him for alms. Toṇḍan consenting to give whatever he desired, Rudra asked that his own son be slaughtered and his flesh be offered to him. At this time the son happened to be in the school, and dozing there saw a dream, and running home related to his father that he saw as if his head cut off in the dream and offered to some. The parents then cut the son to pieces, and reserving his head for a memento, cooked the rest and served it to the distinguished beggar. Then Rudra (of course knowing, by his insight, their secret act), wishing to test the depth and sincerity of the parents' self-sacrificing love for him, demanded that even the remnant kept away (viz., the head) be also served him! [1] [Bhag: Vish: Bk. VII; p: 3149-50. " Oṇṛu ṣolli,, vii-1-7.]

TOPIC 132.

The Delirium, of Love to God.

St. Nammâzhvâr's amorous longing and panting to see God, found vent in a song of his, in which figuratively the saint considers himself to be a mistress, in love with her Spouse, and seized with paroxysm, swoons. The speechless heart at such juncture is however revealed through the mouth of an imagined mother, supposed to be bending over her helpless daughter and describing the latter's condition to her neighbours, who

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1. "அட்ட தொழியக் கட்டது கொள்ளேன்" so goes the saying of Rudra. This legend is beautifully told by Dr. G. U. Pope in his Tiruvâchakam, vide: Pp. xxxviii. Read the story of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac &c. [Gen: xxii]. Also Ṣibi's story in Vanaparva; Mahâ-Bhà 197th Ch:, Pro: Ch: Roy's Edtn.

Cp: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me," "And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me." "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it."

[Matt: x-37, 38, 39].

are collected on the spot, in such language as:—

"Day and night she knows not sleep, [1]
In floods of tears her eyes do swim [2]
"Discus'! she cries; 'O Conch!' she cries,
And clasps her hands, to them bowing:
'Lotus-like eyes'! she weeps and reels:
'Ah! how without Thee can I bear',
She pants and feels all earth for Him:
O Lord Raṅga, abiding where
Waters abundant flow; where fish
Madden'd with joy all leap and dance!
How with my daughter wilt Thou deal!"

[Tiru-vây-mozhi. vii. 2-1 "Kaṅgulum"]

Wherever Bhattar meditated on this verse, he would in intense emotion place both his palms over his head and cry: "Hard-hearted that we are; how are we going to realise the depth of the Saint's love as uttered here!—we who cannot

1, Cp: "Sleep at last has fled these eyes." [Madame Guyon].

2. (a) Cp: "He (St. Francis de Assisi) was endowed with an extraordinary gift of tears. His eyes seemed two fountains of tears, which were almost continually falling from them, insomuch that at length he almost lost his sight. When physicians advised him to repress his tears,—for otherwise he would be quite blind, the saint answered: "Brother physicians, the spirit has not received the benefit of light for the flesh, but the flesh for the spirit: We ought not for the love of that sight which is common to us and flies, to put an impediment to spiritual sight and celestial comfort. [P: 114. Vol. x. Butler's Lives of Saints.]

(b) Says St. Gregory of Nyassa about St. Ephrem:—"We cannot call to mind his perpetual tears without melting into tears. To weep seemed almost as natural to him as it is for other men to breathe. Night and day his eyes seemed always swimming in tears. No one could meet him at any time, who did not see them trickling down his cheeks." [Butler's Lives of Saints, Vol. vii, p: 114].

realise in the least his sentiments,—we who cannot understand his heart!"[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII; P. 3165. "Kangulum" VII. 2-1.]

TOPIC 133.

Complete sacrifice of self love—a sign of entire trust in God.

One characteristic of saintly men is their absolute dependence on God and His Providence. Otherwise they would stand as yet unrid of self-love.[2] Akaḷanka-brahmarâya was building the fort-wall called Aḍaiya-valaindân (the outermost or the 7th Rampart round the Holy Shrine of Ṣrîrangam). In aligning the wall, the house of Iḷaiy-âzhvân came in the way, which he was about to dismantle. Bhattârya (the Pastor of the Râya) came to know this, and sending for Râya addressed him thus:—"My son, it is not the dead-wall as thou thinkest, that really protects our Lord Ranganâtha, but the living walls of the few Holy Dwellers, the Lord's Beloved Saints of the place (of whom Âzhvân is one). Also, have no pride of thinking that thy human endeavours can provide any safeguards (like these material walls) for our Lord. Give up such self-love. It is the Lord that doth all."

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII. P: 3168. "Kangulum VII. 2-1]

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1. Cp: "If we compare several theologians who speak eloquently of the Almighty, but who love Him little, with those who loved Him ardently, as the Ignatiuses, the Cyprians, the Chrysostoms, the Augustines, the Hilaries, the Ephrems, the Gregories, the Bernards, and several other illustrious men of antiquity, (*like the Indian Âzhvârs*), oh! what a difference shall we discover in their language! We all use the same expressions; but the words pronounced by those lovers of the Almighty were inflamed and embalmed, if we may say so, with the delicious perfume of divine love; whereas, with us they are only cold expressions, which neither contain the energy nor the sweetness of charity." [Love of God by Fr: de Sales P: 204: Ch 1. Bk. vi].

2. Cp: "The love of self is more hurtful to the soul than the united power of the world," [Thom: à Kempis, Imit: Chr: xx. Bk. iii].

Read *Journal Intime* of Maine de Biran.

TOPIC 134.

The three successive stages of Love to God.

Three stages of love to God among saints is described: Recollection, Trance and Rallying. Recollection (சிந்தா) is recollection of all the past ravishments of soul, vouchsafed by God. Trance or Fainting is consequent on desolation at this Recollection not yielding present enjoyment. Rallying is the sudden lucidity whilst in this state of trance. This is considered as a dangerous state. The momentary lucidity in delirious trance or senseless state is akin to the sudden lighting up of consciousness when death-coma has supervened; or the sudden flare of the flickering light before it dies out. Nâñjîyar used to relate that when Uynda-piḷḷai chanted St. Nammâzhvâr's verse " Ṣindikkum (சிந்திக்கும்) ', he used to stop where the Saint "rallied ", and exclaim with fear: " Alas, for her (Saint's) lucid state! I am undone ! "

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII, P: 3194. " Ṣinddikkum " VII-2-5.]

TOPIC 135.

Motherhood of God and Fatherhood of God—a difference.

" Mother !. " This way of addressing God had more fascination for the Saints than addressing Him as " Father. " Anand-Âzhvân, for instance, named his daughter as: "*My* Mother Lakshmî; " and Bhattârya used to address Lord Rañganâtha, [the Stationary Deity (*Mûla-vigraha*) in the Holy of Holies at Srîrañgam Temple] thus:—" O Lord! consider me as the trousseau, which thy consort Lakshmî my Mother brings to thee with Her; and consider that my love to thy Provisional Representative [The Movable *Uthsava-vigraha*] merely proceeds by reason of my mother Lakshmî residing with Him, as His inseparable companion. I call Thee: " Dear ", simply be-

cause my Mother is with Thee, and She indeed is *dear* to me."[1]
[Bhag; Vish. Bk. VII, p. 3212. "En-tiru-magaḷ." vii-2-9].

TOPIC 136.

God fully manifest as Ranganâtha;—in parts in other Shrines.

St Nammâzhvâr's hymnal of 1000 verses called Tiru-vây-mozhi is dedicated to Lord Ranganâth of the Holy Metropolis of Ṣrîrangam. While so, how comes it that particular decades of this Hymnal have been dedicated to Lords Resident at other Holy Shrines? To which Nambiḷḷai used to reply:—"Yes, portions from the Main Dedication are doled out to the minor Lords like holy food first offered to Lord Ranga and is then divided out and distributed to the Partial Lords."[2]
[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII, p: 3221: Mugilvannan" VII-2-11.]

TOPIC 137.

Motherhood of God ever spotless.

Lord Râma's welcome of Sîtâ, after her release from Râvana's thraldom was vitiated by feelings of suspicion and ire struggling

1. Vide Topic 15 p: 12; and the copious Foot Notes thereto.

2 Vide, Topic No. 171, for a detailed description of the particular glories manifested in Particular Shrines. &c. In a Criticism [by the Hindu Madras, 1897, in a series of 11 articles] on Dr J. H. Barrows on the claims of Christianity (which should be read by every Hindu of the Modern Times), the following is found (P. 36):—"There was at no time among the Jews a truly spiritual conception of God, and if Christ's God is only a "sublimated and etherealised" edition of 'the ancestral fetish stone of the people of Israel,' we do not see how Christianity can altogether discard the taint of idolatry, in a far more gross form of it than prevails anywhere in India. For, the Indian Idolatry has nothing gross or degrading about it. Every Indian Image is a symbol of some profoundly spiritual conception of God. Let Dr Barrows study from some knowing Hindu the symbolism contained in the conception of God as Ranganâtha of the Ṣrîrangam Temple or Natarâja of the Chidambaram Shrine." Read Intro: to our *Holy Lives of the Âzhvars.*

in his heart to find vent and afford an opportunity to Sîtâ to vindicate herself. Ṣri Râma addressed her thus in acrimonious language :—

"Twas not for thee our blood was shed,
Or Lankâ filled with giant dead.
No fond affection for my wife
Inspired me in the hour of strife.
I battled to avenge the cause
Of honour and insulted laws.
My love is fled, for on thy fame
Lies the dark blot of sin and shame;
And thou art hateful as the light
That flashes in the injured sight.

[Râmâyaṇa VI-118]

Sage Âḷavandâr (Yâmunâchârya) would not brook in his heart the spotless purity of mother Sîtâ being thus unjustly called in question by Lord Râma, and exclaimed in anguished rage against his unreasonable accusation thus :—"It is n't my radiant Mother's light that hurts, but Râmâ's eye that is sore is what is hurt." (That is : the mote is in Râma's eye, Sîta is pure. She is bright like the pure flame but she appears tainted owing to suspicion's darkness obscuring Râma's heart)."[1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk : VII p : 3265. "Pêriyal" VII-3-7.]

TOPIC 138.

Râma-Avatâra abounding in Every Divine Grace.

Kûrattâzhvân's admiration for God, incarnate as Lord Râma was very great and in his excess of preference, all other

1. Cp : (a) "The Holy ghost calls her His own spotless and faithful spouse, over whom the breath of sin never passed." [P. 153. Happiness of Heaven by Rev. F. J. Boudreaux].

(b) "And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye ?" [Matt : vii-3].

Incarnations—even that of Lord Krishṇa—appeared inferior in his sight. The Perfections and Graces of Godship were to him complete in Râma-Incarnation, which eclipsed the glories of all other Avatâras compared with Râma. All other Avatâras were to him like a hoof-marked pool [1] compared with the boundless ocean. Thus did people great and small, declare Râma to be to his father Daṣaratha:—

" Then all the people made reply,
Peasant and townsman, low and high:
'Each noblest gift of form and mind,
O Monarch, in thy son we find.
Do then the god-like virtues hear
Which Râma to our hearts endear.
So richly blest with graces, none
In all the earth excels thy son."

[Râmâyaṇa, ii-2]

Bhattârya like his father Kûranâtha was also in favor of the superior virtues of Râma-avatâr. In order to put Bhattârya to proof, one day Ṣiriy-âttân submitted a question thus:— " Sire! admitted that Lord Râma possesses the full complement of divine virtues, yet to me it seems he doth not possess the virtue of " Condescension " (saulabhya), which Lord Krishṇa pre-eminently possessed, for did not (Krishṇa) go as envoy to the Kauravas at the mere bidding of the Pâṇḍavas, carrying the message (like that tied to the neck of a carrier-pigeon)? " Bhattar retaliated thus in order to defend his own position in favor of Râma:—" Râma certainly was prepared to go as messenger, but unfortunately no body bid him to carry any!" [2]

[Bhag: Vish, Bk. VII, P 3320: " Kaṛpâr " VII-5-1]

1. A shallow indentation made by the cow's hoof on the ground, and filled with water.

2. The mystery of Incarnation is purely Indian. Cp. (a) Bh: Gî: iv-5, with commentaries (by Author)

TOPIC 139.

Enmity with God preferred to friendship with Satan.

In respect of Şişupâla, the sworn enemy of Lord Krishṇa, Âḷavandâr denied that he could have obtained salvation by publicly vituperating Lord Krishṇa. Âḷavandâr defended his statement by saying that as in Şişupâla there was not even the remotest wish for salvation (*arthitva*) it was impossibe for him to have obtained it. Lord Krishṇa killed him by his Discus, simply as a King would kill a rebellious miscreant and cast him out of doors in order that his kingdom may be rid of unrighteousness. And yet Şişupâla is said to have obtained salvation by reason of the good fortune he has had of repeating Krishṇa's Holy Names in the Public Assembly albeit he did so in the course of his malicious indictment; and the good fortune he has had of personally witnessing the Bejewelled Person of the Lord, face to face.[1] The rationale of this extraordinary instance of salvation granted to even a hater of God is accounted

(*b*) Annie Besant's Adyâr Lectures on Avatars, 1899; (*c*) Yogi Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr's Tatva-traya, pp. 141 & 148. (*d*). "God cannot do without us. He cannot afford to lose our love. He clings to us; He pleads with us; He punishes only to get love, and stays His hand in the midst; He melts our hearts with beautiful complainings; He mourns like a rejected lover or a suspected friend. He appeals to us with a sort of humility which has no parallel in human love." [Dr. F. W. Faber, On Creator and Creature, p: 132. Ch. 1. Bk. ii]. All these and various other sentiments are illustrated in the Incarnations of God, as Râma, Krishṇa, &c.

(*e*) "Almighty God subjects Himself to each of His angels and to holy souls, as if He were the hired servant of each, and each of them were His God." St. Thomas [P. 185. Spiritual Combat by F. L. Scupoli].

(*f*) Also read introductions to our *Holy Lives of the Âzhvârs*.

1. The story of Şişupâla is thus wound up in Vishṇu Purâṇa iv-15:—"Thus uttering His Names, even though in malediction; and dwelling upon His Image, even though in enmity, he (Şişupâla) beheld Kṛishṇa, when inflicting his death, radiant with resplendent weapons, bright with ineffable splendour in his own Essence as the Supreme Being; and all his passion and hatred ceased, and he was purified from every defect. Being killed by

for by the infiniteness of God's grace,—a grace, the freeness of which it is beyond our mortal finiteness to conjecture.'[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk VII. P 3346. "Kêtpâr" VII. 5-3.]

TOPIC 140.

God's visits and desertions causing Saints transports of joy and pangs of grief.

It is difficult for ordinary seculars to even remotely imagine the depth of feeling which agitates Saints both in the states of visitation and desertion by God. The most eminent St. Nammâzhvâr, for instance, was ravished by internal joy at time of visitation, insomuch that at such junctures he overflowed with adoring praise as related by him for example in Tiru-vây-mozhi

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the Discus of Vishṇu, at the instant he thus meditated, all his sins were consumed by his Divine Adversary, and he was blended with Him by whose might he had been slain."

Cp:"अरासिकजनसंभाषणतोरासिक जनवाक्कलहमपिश्रेयः ॥"

equivalent to:—"Better a quarrel with good men than fellowship with wicked men."

1. Cp: Matt: xx:—

8. "And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first."

9. "When therefore they were come, that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny."

10. "But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny."

11. "And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house."

12 "Saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats."

13. "But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?"

14. "Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee."

15. "or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil, because I am good?"

16. "So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called but few are chosen."

VII-5. "Karpâr." But when this state was withdrawn, his lamentations alternated, and were so loud as to melt even adamantine hearts of even the godless. So loud were they, it is said, as if the whole vast ocean rose as one person and wept and wailed with him with all the might of its roar. This state of desertion by God is embodied in the succeeding Tiruvâymozhi Hymnal VII-6: "Pâmaru." Ammangi-ammâḷ, as soon as he came to recite this chapter of the Hymnal, would say :—"We can but listen to it sung, and be entertained; but for us to attempt to dive into the abysmal depths of languishment produced by love, finding utterance in such soul-stirring language, is beyond the bounds of the possible." [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII: P: 3382. "Pâmaru" VII-6-1.]

1. Cp: (a) "The vicissitude of day and night in the spiritual life is neither new nor unexpected to those that are acquainted with the ways of God; for the ancient prophets and most eminent saints have all experienced an alternative of visitation and desertion. As an instance of this, the royal prophet thus describes his own case: "When I was in prosperity," says he, "and my heart was filled with the treasures of grace, I said, I shall never be moved." But these treasures being soon taken away, and feeling in himself the poverty of fallen nature, he adds, "Thou didst turn Thy face from me, and I was troubled." [Imit: Chr: Ch: ix. Bk. ii. by Thomas à Kempis].

(b) "When Love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is opened in the soul;
When Love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control."
"Then tell me why these ages of delay?
Oh Love, all-excellent, once more appear;
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!"

[Madame Guyon].

"The God-ecstatic is one whose sole delight or misery consists respectively in God-companionship or God-separation. St. Nammâzhvâr, the ecstatic Vaishṇava Saint describes it as God-madness."
[P. 59. Lectures on Inspiration &c. Part II by Author.]

TOPIC 141.

The outpourings of Saints ; inspired by God.

St. Nammâzhvâr never owned authorship for his Hymnals. He said : God seating Himself in him dictated them and he but repeated the same by his mouth after Him.[1] And it is said that God attaches more value to His deliverances when given through the medium of His beloved Saints than his own direct deliverances. To the latter class belongs Bhagavad-gîta, to the former Tiruvâymozhi. "This relative importance was illustrated indeed," says Nambi Tiruvazhudi-nâdu Dâsar ; "for in all places where people were enlightened as to these matters, when a man who was instructed in Gîta came a-begging to where the elders had collected together in the chief places of the thoroughfares, they dismissed him with a handful of rice, and never allowed him a place among them ; whereas if a holy soul, itinerant, came across warbling the Hymnal Tiruvâymozhi, the whole town and God Himself rose and advanced to meet him, escort him, assign their own place to him, and treat him with every mark of respect and hospitality."

[Bhag : Vish : Bk VII P : 3497. " En-Ṣolli." VII-9-2]

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1. (*a*) St. Teresa writes :—" I know a person who, without being a poet, has sometimes composed upon the spot stanzas of very exact metre, on spiritual subjects, expressing the pain which her soul felt in certain transports of divine love, and the joy with which she was overwhelmed in this sweet pain." Several among the sacred writers, under the influence of the divine inspiration, delivered the heavenly oracles in verse. St. Francis, (of Assisi) in raptures of love, poured forth the affections of his soul and of the divine praises sometimes in animated verse. Two such canticles composed by him are still extant. The first begins as follows :—

" In foco l'amor mi mise,
In foco l'amor mi mise &c."=
" Into love's furnace I am cast;
Into love's furnace I am cast :
I burn, I languish, pine and waste
O love divine, how sharp thy dart
How deep the wound that galls my
heart &c."

[Butler's Lives of Saints, Vol. x. p: 116]

(*b*) Read how Vâlmîki was inspired to deliver Râmâyaṇa &c. &c.

TOPIC 142.

God marks out the saviours of the world

God knows whom to depute as Saviours. He puts His Characteristic mark on them, and inspires them accordingly. Âḷavandâr was sojourning once during his travels at the Holy Shrine Vishṇu Kâñchi (Little Conjeevaram) and had taken his seat to the East of the Holy Ant-Hill, on the steps leading to Kariya-mânikk-âzhvâr; when Râmânuja happened to pass that way. Âḷavandâr, seeing him, remarked: "There is the Chief Personage." Âḷavandâr had no acquaintance with Râmânuja, nor did the latter know him; and yet Âlavandâr by insight marked Râmânuja out as *the* Person,—the anointed and appointed of God to become the Great Religious Reformer of the century. [1]

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. VII. p. 3499 "Âmudalvan" VII-9-3].

TOPIC 143.

God speaks through His chosen vessels unaffected by their personal media.

When God inspires His saints, it is He Himself that speaks through them, making use of them but as his mouth-piece. So did Nammâzhvâr exclaim. [2] On this topic says Embâr:—"If God delivers Himself direct, such gospel is perfectly pure. But if we by personal effort manufacture forth laudatory hymns, they will have their own mark

1. Cp: (*a*) "John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees:—"There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose." [I-7-Mark.] I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." [Ibid: I-8].

(*b*) "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me."

[John xx—21].

2. So did Milton exclaim in his last poem:—

'Give me now my lyre,
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine,
Within my bosom blows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine.'

[P: 703: Theosophist Aug. 1901.]

on them as if laboured out by human ingenuity; but when God makes use of us as his own select instruments by which to proclaim His message to men, it is Himself that speaks. Such a Holy Vessel indeed was St. Nammâzhvâr, who thus hymns his gratitude to God for choosing him as His own instrument, and delivering His messages to men there through, untinged by his own impure medium" [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VII; p. 3501: Appanai" VII-9-4]

TOPIC 144.

Nothing of our own would God have but obedience on our side.

If we could be our own and if we could really own anything as ours, we could then boast of having something of our own to offer to God as a token of our gratitude to Him for all the plenitude of bounty and benignity which He hath shown us. But nothing have we of our own so to offer. What then is there for us to do? There is but this much. We can do His bidding or do service which he commandeth; and *that*, in His thought, is more than sufficient gratitude. It is like a husband fetching home from the market every article required for cooking; and the good house-wife having but to take care of them, prepare nice dishes out of them and serve to the husband, who thereby becomes pleased. So we souls can claim nothing as our own. God gives us all. We are but His stewards and trustees. We have but to put his things (including our bodies and our souls) to just such use as he

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1. Where it is not God, all communications such as those alleged to come through spiritualistic mediums are vitiated and carry no authority; nor will their influence last for any time. Not so the saints.

Cp: (*a*) "The promise of the Father, which you have heard by my mouth." [Acts. 1-4] "the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David." [Ibid: I-16].

willeth. And this is service, and service is accepted as sufficient gratitude returned. [1]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk : VII, P. 3525. " Inbam " VII-10-1]

TOPIC 145.

How God honoreth His Elect.

In what way doth God specially favour His elect? By endowing them with his Divine Grace, in the way He did to St. Nammâzhvâr (by choosing him as His vessel to fulfill a Holy mission on earth)? Yes; and in the same way, for example, that Lord Râma lavished special graces on Hanumân, the Vânar-chief.[2]

[Bhag : Vish : Bk: VII, P. 3541 " Malaradi " VII-10-5]

TOPIC 146.

Implicit obedience and faith to masters, works miracles.

Krimikantha-Chôla (or the worm-necked) was a great hater of Vishnu, and embarked an a crusade of sacrilegious iconoclasm. [3] But he could not break every Vishnu-image with

1. "St. Augustine, in several passages of his works, asks, why God forbade Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and one of the reasons he gives is, that it was " to teach man how great a good, obedience is of itself, and how great an evil disobedience is." * * * For the sin does not arise from the nature of the thing, but from the disobedience which always vitiates the act, let the thing be of great or small importance. * * * And therefore God tried him by obedience, which was an act whereby he was not only to acknowledge his Creator, but also to merit, if he had pleased, an eternal union with Him in the end." [Pp 225-6: Vol. 3: " Rodriguez on Christian and Religious Perfection."]

2. [Vide Râmâyana. V. 64 40 :]:—

बहुमानेनमहताहनूमन्तमवेक्षत ॥

3. Cp: the destruction of Catholic Images by Leo. III, surnamed Isaurian. " He commanded all the images and pictures to be collected, to be carried to the market place and there burned, all paintings on the Church-wall to be white-washed, so that no sacred representation might appear." [P. 47, The Use of Holy Images by Revd. Dr. L. Meurin. Bombay].

impunity, for his advisers told him that some, like that of Lord, Raṅganâtha, were of specially mystically consecrated class whose demolishment would be followed by his own death. He reflected thereon and hit upon the device of appointing a competent sorcerer, who should make himself invisible by applying to his eyes a magical collyrium; then, unseen, he enter into all Vishṇu's Sanctoria and by his incantations extract all the spiritual power centred in the images by mystic rites. Then he could destroy them after being thus rendered effete. Râmânuja came to learn of these unholy projects, and going to his Guru Periya-nambi (also residing at Ṣrîraṅgam) dejectedly said:—"God-sire! these rulers of the Eastern lands have begun these unholy depredations. When they reach our Holy Metropolis—Ṣrîraṅgam—which we have so long guarded, what shall we do?" "I shall", said Periya-nambi, "pace round the Holy Temple,— thus providing a cordon of protection; but could you send a disciple of yours to go with me?"

Râmânuja:—"Whom shall I send?"

Nambi:—"Him who will simply *follow* me with no question troubling his mind that he is a second ***independent*** man following *another* man by his own free choice. He must follow me in such submissive will-resigned manner as if he is my very shadow, (i.e., with no thought of self as having an independent will of its own).[1]

Râmânuja:—Who is there, indeed, Sire! to answer to this description?"

1. The meaning is that both master and pupil must go to God's service with their wills completely fused into one. The obedience must be not only willing but unquestioning. The following of the disciple should be like the planets moving round the sun, or the satellites round their planets, or like the binary stars, or shadow with the substance.

Cp: (*a*) "The Queen of France accompanied her holy spouse, Ṣt. Louis [like Queen Sîtâ her Lord Râma or Ṣatṛughna his brother Bharata, *vide* Râmâyaṇa], in his

Nambi:—"Why, Kûratt-âzhvân is such a soul to be sure! Let him be detailed to me for this service."[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. VII. p. 3541 "Malaraḍi" vii-10-5].

TOPIC 147.

Concealing grace under veil of humility.

Nambiḷḷai left Srîrangam on a pilgrimage to the South Sea where Lord Râma is known, by tradition, to have constructed the famous bridge across the sea to Lanka. [The Holy Spot where Lord Râma laid himself down on his Kuṣa-bed to pray the Lord of the ocean to appear to him, is known by the name of Tirup-pullâṇi, (or *Darbhaṣayanam*).[2]] When he visited this Shrine, he, in the fervour of his devotion, recited the Chapter from St. Tirumangai-âzhvâr's Tirumozhi, bearing on this Shrine (ix-3· "தன்னை"; ix-4: "காவார்") and expatiated thereon in florid

long and toilsome voyage; had she been asked where she was going, she would certainly have replied, I go to the same place as the king; I am acquainted with the general plan of his travels; I am not anxious to know the detail; it suffices to be aware, that I accompany the king. * * * It is he who goes, who undertakes the voyage, and who knows his reasons for doing so; as for me, I do not go, I merely follow." [Love of God by Fr: de Sales, Ch: xiii, Bk: x].

(*b*) "To sail, is not to proceed by our own motion, but by that of the vessel in which we have embarked. The human heart may be said to embark when it abandons itself to the will of God, allowing itself to be conducted by this adorable will, to receive its motion, and not to move itself [Ibid].

(*c*) "It is like an infant at the breast which, being unable to dispose of itself, has no will except to love its mother; on whichever side it is placed, it is satisfied, provided it be in the arms of her whom it loves, and with whom it seems to constitute but one object [Ibid].

1. Cp: "The prayer of Faith shall save the sick" [Jam: 5-15]. [Also See Matt: xxi-21.]

2. "His hands in reverence Râma raised
And southward o'er the ocean gazed;
Then on the sacred grass that made
His lowly couch, his limbs he laid."

[Râmâyaṇa: vi-21-1 ff].

sermons, carrying the audience with him. The fame of this exposition reached the ears of Nañjîyar,—the Guru of Nambiḷḷai,—staying at Ṣrîrañgam. When Nambiḷḷai returned and fell at the feet of Nañjîyar, the latter exultingly complimented his disciple thus (in figurative language.):—

"Son! thy trip to the Holy South Sea has caused waves to beat back as far even as our shores here (Ṣrîrañgam)!"[1] To which Nambiḷḷai in humility to his Master, answered thus:—

"God-Sire! how can waves not arise when a person like me, who knows not even where to bathe in the see, yet ventures to plunge therein and swim?"[2]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. VIII. p. 3677. "Uraiyâ" viii-3-11].

TOPIC 148.

As God giveth, so he taketh.

It was asked why Lord Kṛishṇa first de-crowned the tyrant Kamsa before decapitating him? To this, Ammañgiyammâḷ said:—"When it is a royal captive that is to be punished, all his royal insignia have first to be taken down, and then the man, thus un-royalled (if so it may be called), has to be punished.

By mere sufferance, God permits one individual to become king, investing him with a crown and other insignia of royalty; but when it pleaseth God to unmake the king, the course

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1. This is figurative, meaning that the renown of his exposition of Tiruvâimozhi made in a distant place like Darbhaṣayanam spread as far as Ṣrîrañgam.

2. This is figurative, meaning that he was not an expert in being able to swim in the vast ocean of God's bliss; for if he were, he would know the bearings of the ocean and therefore swim in it without struggling, and therefore creating no disturbance; but being a novice, when he plunged, he lost his bearings, and his helpless strugglings produced so many waves,—the waves thus merely proclaiming his ignorance, but never the consummate knowledge his Master would complimentingly credit him with having.

adopted is to deprive him first of the royal emblems; reduce him to a mere manling and then punish him as he may deserve."[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. VIII. p. 3686. "Vârkadâ" viii-4-1.]

TOPIC 149.

The Old Law and the New Law, or the Laws of Works and of Faith.

Tiru-chchengunnûr is a Holy Shrine. In describing it, St. Nammâzhvâr speaks of it as a spot peopled with Holy Brâhmaṇas ever performing Vedic sacrifices, the fumes of the sacrifices ascending up to Heaven. A question arose as to how men of the new faith—the Upanishads (or the New Testament of the Âryas) could yet perform ritualistic acts prescribed in the Vedas (or the Ârya Old Testament)—such as the sacrifices alluded to. For the former-faith-demands the loving sacrifice of the heart to God and this implying surrender of all sublunary delights as well as those of paradise, ordained as rewards for such sacrifices; (the Vedic ceremonial is used as a means to procure these material and temporary joys).[2] This question was answered thus:—The ritual of the Old Law is observed

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1. (a) Read *Vishnu: Purâṇa* for the story: v-20.

(b) Cp: what in mockery the Antichrist Jews did to Jesus:—"And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak (or purple, the sign of royalty) about him (28)." And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail King of the Jews. (29)." "And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him. (31)." [Matt:]

(c) And (Job) said: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." [Job. I-21].

2. The Old Law is the Religion of sacrificial rituals. The New Law is the Religion of the heart: renunciation and love. The Old Law is the symbolic sacrifice of animals. The New Law is the sac-

by the votaries of the New Law merely to prove their obedience to a Divine Decree, but not with a view to reap the rewards attached to such acts of obedience. It is done as conducive to holy discipline and as engaging the mind in holy occupation,—merely performed as a mark of respect for Laws decreed by God: but when they produce effects withal, they would go to the benefit of the world in ridding it of ungodliness. The following is an illustration:—Râmânuja once resorted to a sacrifice like this in order to get rid of Kṛimikantha Chôḷa. For it is chronicled that this Vishṇu-hater persecuted Râmânuja, who in consequence had to leave the Southern country, and go to the uplands of Maisûr to be there beyond the tyrant's reach. He remaind here for nearly eleven years, and yet he saw the tyrant still living (like Emperor Leo III, surnamed the Isaurian, who reigned an impious reign for twenty-four long mortal years, as well as his son of similar disposition, Copronymus for 34 ingloriously long years.) Then Râmânuja resolved on bringing about his death by performing a sacrifice, using spells and incantations invoking Lord Venkateṣa of Holy Tirupati for the purpose. When two or three days had elapsed, a stinking smell came from the sacrificial fire as if hair was burning and he at once said:—" Stop the ceremoney, the heretic is dead." That same day, a door-keeper of Choḷa, by name Veṅgi, poked his master in the neck with his staff. This caused a wound, which became a

rifice and complete annihilation of the animal in man. [Read. Brahmavâdin Vol. III, pp. 499 ff on the Vedic Ritual and the Vedânta,'].

Cp: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell on your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: Neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. [Amos v, 21 24]. [Read Romans Ch IV; Luke XV. 4 to 32; and Theo: Germ: P: 62]

loathsome stinking sore full of vermin, and Choḷa gave up his ghost.[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk VIII; P: 3697 "Alladôr" VIII-4-5]

TOPIC 150.

God Enamoured of us. Our feeble cry superfluous.

St. Nammâzhvâr sang: "Lo! I called aloud to Thee to come and reign in my heart." Tiruk-kurugaip-pirân Piḷḷân explained this thus:—"What had I done, that I should have been obliged to call on Him? Did He indeed forget His doting love for us? what then could be the reason for His delay in coming to me? Could it be, that all panting and craving is to be on my side for Him and not on His side for me?"[2]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VIII, P. 3773. "Iruttum" VIII-7-1]

TOPIC 151.

The hypostatic relation of the soul to God.

The nature of soul is described to be that which is intelligent *(jñâna)* and blissful *(ânanda)*. But these attributes are of little account. What characterizes the soul is its relation of leigeship (as creature) to God the Lord (as Creator)=(*Seshatva*). Once, when Râmânuja was holding his holy court of religious discussions, this topic came up. Though Râmânuja was per-

1. Cp: "And forthwith an Angel of the Lord struck him (Herod), because he had not given the honor to God: and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost."

[Acts. xii-23].

2 "The heart of God is passionately enamoured of ours; and our crying for Him is superfluous; but that we do so is a sign of the fruitfulness of the inclination which He has Himself implanted in us. Cp: "Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock: if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

[Apocalypse iii-21].

fectly informed in the matter, he wished to see the truth expounded by his Guru, Tiruk-kôttiyûr Nambi. He called his disciple Kûrattâzhvân, and directed him to go to Nambi and learn from him the truth. He did accordingly journey to Tirukkôttiyûr, and for six months volunteered at Nambi's. But Nambi condescended not to reveal the secret truths. Kûranâtha thereon asked his permission to return to his Guru Râmânuja when Nambi condescended and said:—" Son, dost thou not know that St. Nammâzhvâr, who is by God Himself inspired and illuminated, hath said: " In me the *vassal*? [VIII-8-2 Adiyên"]. Kûranâtha at once understanding the hint exclaimed in joy:— " God-sire, I have now known the truth; I am blessed"; and taking leave of him returned to Srîrangam. [1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: VIII; P: 3804. " Adiyên " VIII-8-2]

TOPIC 152.

A short Treatise on the nature of the Entity called Soul.

God was pleased to give St. Nammâzhvâr the experience or realization of the nature of soul as hinted in Topic 151. The saint thus described this experience in T. V. M. viii-8-5:—

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1. This truth is the second of the Five Truths as summarized by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr in his " *Hinduism* P. 2" thus:—

(1) " Of God the Lord, (2) of soul, His liege, (3) of grace—the means (4) Of love—the end, and (5) of the lusts that stand between, Doth Ev'ry Ved, Biography, and Hist'ry teach; And Great Saints—skilled in Ved's doctrine and practice, preach." See also Pp: 15-16 of his *Tatvatrayam*: " The soul-essence is ....(xiii) disposable for His purposes (Sesha); and p: 24 (*Ibid*):—" By the soul-essence being " disposable for the Lord's purposes (sesha)," it is meant that, resembling (in respect of perfection of disposability), sandal (or perfume), flowers (plucked), betel-nut and other material objects, which exist, i. e. are prepared, not for themselves at all, but are destined solely for the use of others than themselves, and are consequently designated by Kant as " mere selfless (unconscious) means for the realisation of the moral law." (Schwegler, p. 214) the soul-essence is liable to be disposed of as pleases the Lord &c., &c."

"நின்ற வொன்றை யுணர்ந்தேனுக் கதனுள் நேர்மை யது விது வென்று
ஒன்று மொருவர்க் குணரலாகா துணர்ந்து மேலும் காண்பரிது,
சென்று சென்று பரம்பரமாய் யாதுமின்றித் தேய்ந்தற்று
நன்று தீதென்றறிவரிதாய் நன்றாய் ஞானம் கடந்ததே."

Trans: "It is not possible to give a description of that wonderful entity, the soul (âtma):—the soul which is eternal, and is essentially characterized by intelligence (*jñâna*);—the soul which the Lord has condescended to exhibit to me as His mode, or related to Him as the *predicate* is to the *subject*, or *attribute* is to *substance* (or consonants to the vowel A);—the soul, the nature of which is beyond the comprehension of even the enlightened;—the soul which cannot be classed under any category, as *this* or *that*;—the soul, whose apperception by the strenuous mental effort called *yoga* (psychic meditation) is even then not comparable to such perception or direct proof as arising from the senses conveying knowledge of the external world;—the soul (as revealed to me by the Lord) transcending all other categories of things, which could be grouped as 'body' or as 'the senses', or as 'the vital spirit' (*prâṇa*), or as 'the mind' (*manas*), or as 'the will' (*buddhi*), because destitute of the modifications and corruptions to which all these are subject;—the soul, which is very subtle and distinct from any of these;—neither coming under the description "good", or "bad." The soul is briefly an entity which does not fall under the cognizance of sense-knowledge.

Commentary. This verse is a description of the soul, which with reference to God, is somewhat analogous to the description of whiteness which belongs to a white wall or white cloth. The idea that is intended to be conveyed is that the soul is as it were an appendage to the Lord, a dependent (or hypostatic, say) co-existence with the Lord, an attribute to Him, the *Substans.*

(மின்ற வென்ற &c.): The soul is a unique Verity distinct from the body, the external senses, the sensory (*manas*) and the reason (*buddhi*). While these are perishable, the soul alone remains apart as the Imperishable.

St. Nâmmâzhvâr never throughout his T. V. M. Hymnal up to this, bestowed any appreciable attention to the nature of soul, for the reason that all his mind and heart were absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord and His Blessed Attributes, Glory &c., before which soul-nature is like the fire-fly before the Glory of the Effulgent Luminary, the Sun. The Saint had no time to give to *gnosis*, or rational meditation to realise soul-nature, to the detriment of *amor* or emotional devotion to realise God. For, as in the manner of the released (or saved) soul, not caring to waste a thought over the painful memories surrounding the embodied state—since abandoned—, the saint who is transported with the revels of his enjoyment with his Lord, the Spouse, never considers it his worth while to waste his time over a search after the inferior kind of soul-knowledge.

The Saint sketches however a knowledge of this inferior nature, because, as a part and mode and predicate of Himself, God was pleased to bestow this knowledge on him.

(அது விது வென்று &c): The soul cannot be known as *this* or *that*, for all objects of experience are known by the methods of agreement and difference; but no such method is applicable to the *thing* soul.

(ஒன்று மொருவர்கு &c): Neither by speech nor by any process of thought is it possible to disclose the nature of the soul even to those minds who have made great advance in spiritual knowledge.

(உணர்ந்து மேலும் &c.,): Even if some knowledge concerning it is had, it is only partial knowledge of it, not knowledge of it in its entirety. Bhagavad-gîta x, 1. 54 declares;—

"Arjuna! to know, to see, and to enter into, the true nature of spirit, is difficult."

(சென்று சென்று &c). Beyond and beyond, does soul's nature transcend the several vestures veiling it,—groupable under the general categorical heads as (1) *anna-maya* (gross body), (2) *prâṇa-maya* (subtle or vegetative body), (3) *mano-maya* (mind-body) &c.

(பாதுமின்றித் தேய்ந்தற்று): Not partaking of the nature of any of these categories, nor of the imperfections attaching thereto, the soul stands aloof, as of its own distinct, subtle, species.

(ஒன்று நின்றொன்று &c): When a comparison is instituted between one object and another, or as when one material principle of a group is compared with another of another group, notions such as: 'this is *better* than that'. or 'that is *worse* than that.' arise; but soul being a spiritual Principle it is incapable of such comparisons.

(ஒன்றும் &c). The soul is thus by itself a singular Verity, and characterised by its own peculiar attributes of intelligence (*jñâna*) and bliss (*ânanda*).[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. VIII. p. 3814. ff. "Ninra" VIII-8-5]

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1. (*a*) The description of soul-nature as embodied in this short Treatise, is similarly given in St. Mânika Vâchakar's 'House of God.' "சென்று சென்றணுவாய்த்தேய்ந்து தேய்ந் தொன்றான்"="Nearer and nearer to Thee it draweth, wearing away atom by atom (its non-spiritual accretions), till it is one with Thee."

(*b*) The whole of Section 1 - treating of Soul-nature or *chit* as it is called,—of the treatise, Tatva-traya, Engl: translated by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi, must in this connection be studied, in order to learn in a condensed form all about the soul, that otherwise has to be picked up from all the vast lore of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

TOPIC 153.

The degeneration of Modern Times.

St. Nammâzhvâr described the Holy Shrine Tirup-puliyûr as a spot blessed with abundance &c. Bhattar jestingly remarked here :—" How could our Saint describe this place as *blessed* when its inhabitants are racked to pay rents and die ? " [This is as much as to show what a vast difference it has made between the Saint's time and the time when Bhattârya lived —an interval of about 4000 years! People in our Saint's time, lived in ease, peace and prosperity, but in Bhattârya's time, the Rulers had changed, and had set themselves to tax people heavily and screw and defraud them in various ways, of what little they had and thus impoverish them to the verge of degeneracy, demoralisation and death. Hence peace and plenty having given place to misery and poverty.][1]

[Bhag : Vish. Bk. VIII. p. 3863. "Anri " viii-9-10].

1. As applied to Religious degeneracy of the Modern Indians, the following from pp : 40-41 of the (Madras) Hindu's Criticism on Dr. J. H. Barrow's claims of Christianity [1897] should be taken to heart by all the young men of Modern India :—" It is necessary at all costs to preserve our Ancient Religion (*Sanâtana Dharma*) under whose shadow we have so long flourished and have managed to preserve our national integrity unimpaired under all the vicissitudes of fortune that have happened to us. " No nation can part with its religion without destroying its mental continuity and cutting itself off in a fatal way from the sources of its strength." Let every true-born Indian's heart hug this great truth to itself and profit betimes by realising its great and pregnant import. We are often grieved in the inmost depths of our heart to see that young men in India are bewitched by the attractions of Agnosticism and Atheism or Materialism and forget the great scientific Truths of the modern comparative study of Religions. India can only be preserved and raised by faith in her own higher Vedantic Truth.'

Bishop Whitehead in his Address in Bangalûr [31st July 1901] on ' Education and Religion,' remarked : " No one, I think, would seriously challenge the statement that the general result of University Education in India has been to produce a very widespread unsettlement in matters of religious belief and a vast amount of religious indifference."

TOPIC 154.

The Greatness of God's own Saints

To be liege to God's privileged apostles or saints on earth is declared to be of greater virtue and value than allegiance to God Himself direct.[1] In the days of Bhattârya, one of his disciples who had travelled to the Hoysaḷa country (or Maisûr) returned to Ṣrîrañgam. Bhattârya said to him: "Son, we have heard that thou hast during thy travel done great service to God's apostles, or God's own men. Thou dost therefore deserve to be taught St. Nammâzhvâr's Chapter in Tiruvâymozhi, which particularly treats of this topic, viz., of the greatness of God's own saints. [VIII-10: "Nedumál"].[2]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. VIII p. 3870. "Neḍumâl" viii-10-1].

1. Vide Bh: Gitâ with Râmânuja's commentary thereon by Author: VII-18. "The *jnânî* is to be known as My very soul." *Commty*:—As for the *jnânî*, I deem him as My own self, i. e. my very life depends on him. If it be asked how, the reason is that in the same manner that he cannot live without Me, I cannot live without Him."

2. (*a*) It is considered by the Viṣishtâdvaitis that service to God direct is subject to vicissitudes, and liable to forfeiture by His unopposable will; whereas service to God's own saints is safe against such danger. In the contemplation of God's beauty, the blessed are likely to be engulphed so as to become incapable of service, whereas no such danger is confronted in the service to the Godly. When accepted by the Godly for service, this acceptance is beyond countermanding by God's will, and beyond defeat by His captivating beauty, beyond transport produced by His enjoyment, by which the soul becomes transfixed and incapacitated for service. Service to the Godly has therefore been declared to be the Highest Fruit in salvation; it is the highest ambition one must strive for; not as high is all the worldly riches and prosperity; not the restoration to one's own glory and pristine purity of soul; not possessing, enjoying or even serving God.

Cp: (*b*) Rishi Ṣândilya's saying:—

सिद्धिर्भवतिवानेति संशयोऽच्युतसेविनां ।
नसंशयोऽस्तितद्भक्तपरिचर्यारतात्मनाम्॥

TOPIC 155.

Inordinate affection for wife and children.

Man deceives himself by inordinate affection for wife and children. St. Nammâzhvâr says:—"these are goods purchased. When purchased, so much of the man's heart twines round them that he even drives his parents out into the street dressed in beggars' rags." [A story is related here—as regards wife—as of recent occurence. A Brâhman youth spinned about from place to place begging for money wherewith to purchase a wife. At last he arrived at Mysore, and was put up in Ahobil-math. He had already collected about 3 to 400 Rupees,

"Service to God direct may end in fruit or not; Service to God's elect, this doubt containeth not."

(*c*) "All therefore that we have to consider when we obey, is the will of God; for whether it be declared to us by himself, by an angel, or by any one whomsoever, we are always obliged to a submission to his orders, let the instrument he uses to signify them to us be what it will. St. Bernard, discussing this subject, cites St. Bennett's words, which are the same in substance with those already mentioned. "The obedience," says he, which we render a superior is paid to God, who says, 'he that hears you hears Me.' So that whatever he who holds the place of God commands, supposing it to be not evidently contrary to God's will, it is to be received by us as if it came from God Himself. For it is the same thing to know His will either from His own, from an angel's, or from a man's mouth." St. Bernard also, in the same place, cites a maxim generally admitted by holy men:—"Let it be God Himself or His vicegerent that commands us anything, we must execute it with equal care, deference, and respect, so long as man commands nothing that is repugnant to the law of God." [Christian and Religious Perfection, p: 277-8 Vol iii. Ch: xi Bk. v. by Rodriguez].

Read Bhâgavata x-86-52 to 60: Lord Kṛishṇa preaching:—"*Brahman! tenugrahâr thâ ya samprâptân viddhy amûn dvijân*" &c.

(*d*) "And the king answering shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." [Matt: xxv-40].

(*e*) "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.'

[Ibid. xxv-45].

(*f*) "Thy holy angels are ordained ministering spirits, and sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation!."

[Imit: Chr: Ch viii. Bk. iii.]

giving him full hopes of soon getting a lady to his side. But as luck would have it, he fell ill, grew worse till he was on his death-bed writhing in agony. When good neighbours came to soothe him, and asked what ailed him, he cried out thus :— " Alas ! at this dying moment I have not had the blessing of a beautiful young maiden, draped in finery, standing by my pillow and cooling my burning brows with her sweet tears ! "] [1]

As for inordinate love for sons, the story is cited of Ṣantanu forfeiting his wife Gaṅgâ for the sake of his eighth son Bhîshma, whom he would not allow her—according to his promise to her—to throw into the river, as she had done the seven previously born sons.[2]

[Bhag : Vish. Bk. IX. p. 3910. " Koṇḍa-penḍîr " ix-1-1],

1. This event, as one which actually came to his notice, our spiritual Teacher Ṣrî Mâdhavam-paḷḷi Ṣrinivâsâchârya related to us.

Cp : " नस्मरिष्यन्तिगोविन्दं नरकोत्तारकंजना: ।
चरमेपिक्षणेसास्त्रं दारान्द्रक्ष्यन्तिदु:खिता: ॥"

" The world thinks not of Govinda,
Who would them lift from Infernum,
The moment e'en when breath is last
On wives they dote with eyes-full tears.

2. *Vide Mahâbhàrata* : Âdi : 98, 93. Prot : Ch : Roy's Edtn.

Cp : (*a*) " जायमानोहरेज्जायां वर्धमानोहरेद्धनं ।
क्षीयमाणोहरेत्प्राणान् नास्तिपुत्रसमोरिपुः ॥

(*b*) " The moment a man gives way to inordinate desire, disquietude and torment take possession of his heart.

" The weak in spirit, who is yet carnal and inclined to the pleasures of sense, finds great difficulty in withdrawing himself from earthly desires ; he feels regret and sorrow as often as this abstraction is attempted ; and every opposition to the indulgence of his ruling passion kindleth his indignation and resentment (Cp: our Bh gîta, II. 62, 63. and Bhâgavata xii-21-19 ff).[Imit: Chr: Thomas à Kempis, Ch : vi, Bk. 1.

(*c*) " He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." [Mat : x-37].

TOPIC 156.

Divine Service—Three kinds.

Divine service is of three kinds as classified by Kûratt-âzhvân :—

(I). Like Bharata carrying out the will of Lord Râma to the exclusion of his own will; or the acquiescing disposition of the heart, which prompts the will to submissively act up to a Divine command, never asking for a reason or questioning its propriety; nor performing it with any selfish hope for requital. This kind of service is what St. Nammâzhvâr characterises as that " of which the depth is only known to those to whom the very performance of the service is itself the reward (or fruit)." (This is a service which is rendered wherever God be pleased to place the servitor, whether in his presence or otherwise).

" சயமேயடிமை தலை நின்றார்" [T. V. M: viii-10-2].

(2). Like Lakshmaṇa whose service was ever with, and never without, Lord Râma. Here the servant's own will is *active*, instead of *passive* as in case (1). Service is in this case ever in God's presence, and is done even before a command is given by the master. Lord Râma for example would have Lakshmaṇa remain in Ayodhyâ and not follow him into his exile. But Lakshmaṇa's will was actively opposed to Râma's will; and he therefore said to Râma :—

" Bereft of thee my life is in peril.
Like fish removed out of wat'ry rill."

This service is what St. Nammâzhvâr characterises as that " which is rendered to God ever in His company, (not for a moment bearing to be separated from Him) :—

" நீக்கமில்லா வடியார்" [T. V. M: viii-10-10].

(3). Like Ṣatṛughna who never thought of serving Lord Râma, but him alone viz., Bharata,—the *servant* of Lord Râma. Whereas Bharata's will was subject to Râma, Ṣatṛughna's will was subject to Râma's servant. In his solicitude to be the servant of Râma's servant, Ṣatṛughna would think even Râma's presence itself as an impediment to his duty to Bharata. Ṣatṛughna thus elected to serve not the Lord directly, but Him indirectly by preferring to serve the Lord's elect. This service is characterised by St. Nammâzhvâr as: "that which is perfectly untinged." Service is said to be tinged when, in the idea of serving God direct and to the exclusion of His Elect, the element of pride enters, viz., the pride that he is face to face with God, and that he is preferred beyond others. This is present *actively* in Lakshmaṇa, *passively* in Bharata, but entirely *absent* in Ṣatṛughna[1].

"கோதிலடியார்" [T. V. M: viii-10-9].

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX. p. 3907. "Koṇḍa-peṇḍîr" ix-1-1].

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1. Service No (1) may be described as:—"the self-will dying to itself and living to God's will."
Service No (2) may be described as:—"the self-will living to itself, and living to will of God."
} called: "*Prathama-Parva Nishthâ.*"

Service No (3) may be described as:—"the self-will dying to itself and living to God's servants' will. } called: "*Charama-Parva Nishthâ.*"

Service No. 1 is described by St. Fr: de Sales thus:—"We can follow the Almighty more simply by allowing ourselves to be conducted without making any exertion—that is, without obliging our will to produce particular and distinct acts to conform to that of God. Then we resemble an infant in its mother's arms, acquiescing simply in whatever God pleases to ordain. This species of simple and general acquiescence may be called union, or, more correctly speaking, unity; because, in the state we treat of, the will of man, morally speaking, forms but one will with that of God." [Love of God: p: 364. Ch: xiv. Bk. ix]. This is called by the Viṣishṭâdvaitins: "*Pâratantrya.*"

Service No, 2 is thus described:—"We can follow our Heavenly Father in two ways: First, by walking alone—that is, making use

TOPIC 157.

How worldlings change sides!

The world looks on poverty with eyes of supercilious disdain. Piḷḷai-Tirunaraiyûr-Araiyar used to relate thus :—" A man grew rich by the help of a friend. The friend became poor thereby. On account of old friendship, the friend invited the rich man to his house for dinner on a certain occasion. But the rich man would not condescend to come, would not even inquire his welfare, lest by such an act, he might (1) suffer in the estimation of the world as having kinship with a poor man; and (2) lest the poor man rise in its estimation as the "favoured" man by him!![1].

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX. p. 3917. "Poruḷ" ix-1-3].

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of our own will, and conforming it to His. * * * Thus we practice resignation to the commands of God, which supposes the marked exercises of our will. * * * An act of my will is necessary, by which I shall conform to the will of God." [Ibid, p: 363-64. Ch. xiv', Bk. ix]. This is called: "*Bhagavat-Ṣeshatva.*"

Service No. 3: St. Fulgentius used to say:—"that those were true religious, who, having mortified and broken their own wills, lived in a holy indifference to all things, and gave themselves totally into the hands of their superiors, by neither willing or not willing anything of themselves, but by following their abbot's counsel and command in all things." [Page 228, Vol. iii. ch. i 5th Treatise, V. F. A. Rodriguez on Christian and Religious Perfection]. "This is called *Bhâgavata-Seshatva.*" [*Vide* the Lives of Sts. *Madhura-kavi* and Ândhra-pûrṇa and The "Good-word Jewel" by Yogi Pârthasârathi: Pp. 34 ff: Sentences 436-494.]

1. Cp: (*a*) [Job : xix: 13—19]:

" My acquaintances like strangers have departed from me." 13.

" My kinsmen have forsaken me, and they that knew me have forgotten me." 14.

" They that dwell in my house, and my maid-servants have counted me as a stranger, and I have been alike an alien in their eyes." 15.

" I called my servant, and he gave me no answer, I entreated him with my own mouth.'- 16.

' My wife hath abhorred my breath, and I entreated the children of my womb." 17.

" Even fools despised me, and when I was gone from them, they spoke against me." 18.

[continued on page 179].

TOPIC 158.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

St. Nammâzhvâr exhorts temporals to at least ejaculatorily call on God's names, which he says is the easiest mental act, attended with neither exertion nor fatigue. Prahlâda, the exemplary lover of God, exhorted his school-mates—the sons of Râkshasas—to ejaculate God's names, in doing which he asked :—

" They that were sometime my counsellors, have abhorred me : and he whom I loved most is turned against me." 19.

(b) यस्पृष्टोनपदासएवचरणौस्प्रष्टुंनसम्मन्यते ||

= " Who, with our foot unworthy was to touch,
Now thinks his foot unworthy for our touch."

or

" Whom *erst* e'en with our foot, we would not touch
Now us permits not e'en his foot to touch."

(c). " அறஞ்சாரா நல்குரவீன்றதாயா னும் பிறன் போல நோக்கப்படும்". [1047]. Vaḻḻuvar's Kuraḻ.

= " Poverty maketh e'en mother look on her son as some other."

Dr. Pope's Trans : —

" From indigence devoid of virtue's grace
The mother e'en that bare, estranged will turn her face."

(d). Cp: King Drupada's answer to Droṇa when the latter sent word to the king: " thy friend is come",' the king, grew wroth, said : " great kings can never be friends with such luckless and indigent wights as thou ! It *is true there* was *friendship between thee* and me before, for we were then both equally circumstanced. But Time, that impaireth everything in his course impaireth friendship also. In this world friendship never endureth for ever in any heart. Time weareth it off. * * * Friendship can never subsist between a poor man and a rich man &c." Mahâ-bhâ : Âdi-Parva Ch : 132: (Prot: Ch : Roy's Edtn).

(e) " Amen I say to you, that a richman shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven." " And again I say to you it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven."

[Matt xix23-24].

'" Supreme!" should ye call Him in morn,
"Kṛishṇa!" should ye call Him in noon,
"Govind!" should ye call Him in eve,
Doth even this cause ye effort?' [1].

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX. p. 3930. "Matronṛu" ix-1-7].

TOPIC 159.

No gain except God satisfieth.

In the course of singing St. Nammâzhvâr's verse "Paṇḍai-nâḷ" [T. V. M. ix-2-1] when he came to the phrase: "Turn Thy sweet eyes on me", Piḷḷai-Têvap-perumâḷ-Araiyaṛ, dwelt on it repeatedly, when his father Âzhvâr rose and said:—" Son, why dost thou by such plaintive appeals, plague the Deity? Hath He not blessed thee with a sweet voice? Hath He not placed at thy disposal such sweet canticles (as those of our saint) thou art singing? Hath He not conferred on thee enough

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1. Cp: "That the mind should ever and anon, both amid business and recreation, be called home for a second or two to the Presence of God dwelling in its dark recesses; this is the meaning of recollectedness of spirit. In days of hard and drudging work, in days of boisterous merriment, in days of excitement and anticipation, it is wonderfully refreshing thus to recollect the mind, and place it consciously under the eye of the Divine Majesty."

* * "Ejaculatory Prayer is Prayer darted up from the heart to God, not at stated intervals, but in the course of our daily occupations and amusements. * * * As the archer first draws the bow in towards himself, so the Christian retires, by a momentary act of recollection, into his own mind, and there realizes the Presence of God. Then he launches one short, fervent petition into the ear of that Awful Presence, throwing his whole soul into the request. And, lo, it is done! The blessing descends, prosecuted, overtaken, pierced, fetched down from the vault of Heaven by the winged arrow of Prayer."

["Thoughts on Personal Religion" Pp: 144-145, by Dr. E. M. Goulburn.]

of riches and children? What then hath He not done to thee yet; and what maketh thee then to be so meltingly plaintive?"[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX, p. 3950; "Paṇḍâi-nâḷ:" ix-2-1].

TOPIC 160.

Divine Dispensations stagger feeble hearts.

Bhattârya, when he heard the death of Tiru-naraiyûr-Araiyar[2] mournfully exclaimed:—"Alas! Lord! Thy irresistible will (in causing us such bereavements), is bearable by such strong-boned souls as Râmânuja, whose love to Thee can by no kind of visitation shake or flag.[3] But how canst Thou thus

1. (*a*) This is indirectly praising the son for his cordial wish to possess God more than every earthly gift He may be pleased to bestow, and secondly recommending patience before God may Himself be pleased to reveal Himself. The spirit of the son's wailing is to be found in Jesus's saying:—"For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul.? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? [Matt: xvi-26].

(*b*) Bh. Gîta. vi-22. "*That* gained, no other gain is considered higher; in *that* firmly seated, no kind of grief can move."

2. The circumstances attending the death of this martyr are thus related by Periya-Jîyar or Maṇavâḷa-Mahâmunigal (*Sams*: Ramyajâmâtṛi-Muni. A C.: 1370) in his commentary to Ṣrî-vachana-Bhûshaṇa (*vide* this work's Engl: trans: by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi Aiyangâr, called the Good-word Jewel):—"Aṛaiyar with his family was on a visit to the Holy Lord Veda-Nârâyaṇa, Resident in Tiru-Nârâyaṇapura. Heretics set fire to the temple. All the inmates ran out from fear. But Aṛaiyar's heart, bleeding with love for God, did not permit him to desert the image which was being devoured by the flames. He resolved to remain and die with his God. His sons would not desert their father. So father and sons remained and made a holocaust of themselves to the fire. Cp: "He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it." [Matt: x. 39; also see Luke: ix-24, xvii-33; John: xii-25].

3. The reference here is to sorrows borne by Râmânuja in the days of the heretic Râja-Choḷa the "worm-necked," For, he persecuted the Vaishṇavas, demolished their temples and images, deprived Saints like Kûrattâzvân and Periya-nambi of their eyes, consequent on

visit me, of weak back-bone? Thy Indefeasible will is fit to be levelled against such stout hearts as that of Râmânuja, who in spite of any misfortune which may befall, will yet never slack in the least their ardent love for Thee? Râmânuja alone who is thus fortified by strong faith in Thy dispensations is able to interpret every adverse event that happens, as sent not with an intent to molest creatures but sent as a cure for their sins. But my puny, weak and vacillating heart is no proof to the operations of Thy Powerful Free-will."

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX, p. 3964, "Puḷiṅguḍi" ix-2-14].

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which the latter expired; compelled Râmânujâ to leave his beloved shrine, Ṣrîraṅga, and exile himself to other countries; and yet he himself, though a sinner, was yet given a long lease of life. Bhattar says that Râmânuja alone is able with his strong bone and stout heart to bear and brave such reverses, not he.

Cp: *Pope's Essay on man I.* 10:

(*a*) "Cease then, nor ORDER imperfection name.
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour;
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite
One truth is clear, WHATEVER is, is RIGHT."

(*b*) "Oh blind to truth and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best,
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest."

[Ibid: IV-3].

(*c*) Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent
At aught Thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught Thy goodness lent."

[*Pope's Universal Prayer*. 9]

TOPIC 161.

The Lord judges by the spirit not by the letter.

Cordiality and humility in the heart when hymning the praises of God is looked for by God; and neither the matter of the hymn nor its manner. In the days of Râmânuja, his disciples Mudaliy-âṇḍân (= Dâṣarathi) and Vaṅgip-purattu-Nambi both went to visit Lord Raṅganâtha. There was great gathering there, composed of the high and the low, the learned and the illiterate. Of the two, Nambi took his station by the side of the group of humble cow-herdesses (a Ṣûdra class inferior to Brâhmans) who had come there; and Âṇḍân as usual joined the ranks of the Srî-vaishṇavas, (the high Brâhmaṇ caste). Âṇḍân observing the unusual conduct of Nambi in having joined the low ranks of visitors, queried him: "Brother! how is it thou hast left our high-class group and joined with the ranks of the low-caste women?"

Nambi: "We are swelling a bit with the pride of our high caste; these creatures are humble and ignorant. It struck me that according to the text:—" Nor caught a look from Râma's eye," [1] the Lord would be pleased to look more graciously on the low and humble rather than on those puffing with pride of caste, learning &c. Hence I took my place with them."

Aṇḍân: "Then pray tell me what all they did say, and what thou didst say."

Nambi: "They, in their own unlaboured and unvarnished rural tongue, praised the Lord thus:—'Dear Lord, do thou drink milk! do thou eat fruit! do thou wear warm robes &c.,'[2]. and I, in my usual learned and high-sounding Samskṛit addressed the Deity as: 'Victory be to Thee, Victor be Thou' &c. [3]

1. Vide Râmayaṇa ii-17-14 பொன்னூலே பூணுநூலிடுவீர், நாறுபீதா
2. Original: "பாலுண்பீர், பழமுண்பீர், ம்புருவீர், அழுத்தவிட்டடையுடுப்பீர்."
3. Original: "Vijayasva, Vijayî-bhava."

Aṇdân: "Well, brother, even in their ranks thou didst not think of dropping such stiff Samskrit! We are we; and they are they, howmuchsoever thou mightst forget and conceal our differences. Come, join our ranks as usual."[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX, p. 3977. "Eṅgaḷ" ix-2-8].

TOPIC 162.

How endearing to Heart are Holy Names.

Kôyilâyttân was a disciple of Bhattârya. He had a son whom he named Bhattârya out of love for his Holy Teacher. The son died however, and Âythân was inconsolable in his grief; he came and cast himself at Bhattar's feet bemoaning his loss. Bhattârya consoled him thus:—"Son! grievest thou for thy son, because he bore my name which is so dear to thee? Then grieve not, for do I not, of that same name (so dear to thee), live for thee?" So saying he got an image made like himself, and bestowed it on Âythân as a Holy souvenir, (on which to lovingly dwell, as before he did on his son).

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. IX. p. 3995: "ôrâyiram" ix-3-1].

Cp: "अज्ञोवदातिविष्णाय सुज्ञोवदतिविष्टवे ।
नतयोरन्तरंह्यास्ति भावभाव्योजनार्दनः ॥

"Vishnâya' says, th' illiterate,
Says 'Vishṇave' the literate;
No difference between them, sees
The Lord, who their hearts alone sees".

1. Cp: (*a*) "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." [Isai: xxix-13].

(*b*) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." [Matt: xviii-4].

(*c*) Blessed are the poor in spirit."

[Luke: vi-20].

(*d*): "Lo the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind.
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way."

[Pope's Essay on Man Epistle 1]

(*e*) "My son, give me your heart" [Prov. xxiii-26]

TOPIC 163.

The Beatific Vision throwing saints into ecstasy.

A ten-day Festival is often celebrated in our Holy Temples. On the Preparatory Day to the first day, Vishvaksêna, the Archangel, goes in procession through the streets to see that they are clean, free of obstacles and duly decorated &c., for the reception of the Lord coming in procession on the first day following, which is called the " Flag-Hoisting " day (= *Dhvaj-ârohaṇa*), when Angel Garuḍa's (Kerub) picture painted on canvas is consecrated, taken in procession and hoisted aloft the high altar-pillar (*Dhvaja-stambha*) which is permanently planted in front of the Holy Shrine. Nambiḷḷai used to relate of his Guru Nañjîyar that he (the latter) went into raptures over St. Nammâzhvâr's Decad beginning: [illegible] " (= Lord! Thy hand decked with the Discus &c., *T. V. M. IX-1*)—in which our Saint refers to God having deigned to reveal Himself to him in spite of his insincere and ungrateful heart—which Decad Nañjîyar happened to recite on the Preparatory Day. The Lord's Image on that day is most beautifully ornamented,—the salient feature of the adornment being the wearing of the Holy Basil (= Tuḷasi) Wreath (= Vaijayanti), which in Vaishṇava Symbology is Lord. Vishṇu's Sovereign insignium indicating His Universal Lordship. This specially embellished Figure of the Lord served as the sensible object for Nañjîyars contemplation which, coupled with his cordial reflections over the sense of the above-cited Decad, sent him into transports of joy. On the following first day (aforesaid) when he recited St. Nammâzhvâr's Decad IX-3, verse 5: "Maname", when he came to the passage therein: "Lord! wreathed in cool sweet basil, Peerless Thou art," his memory ran back to the Beautiful Figure in basil-wreath, on which he had contemplated the previous day; and he exclaimed: "Like this, or like the Lord who appeared to St. Nammâzhvâr in Decad

V-1, he is coming to us wreathed in basil". All this shows how much love and condescension God manifests towards his creatures regardless of their baseness and insignificance. 1

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IX. P: 4009: "Maname" ix. 3.5]

1. (*a*) Through images, Saints have realised the Beatific Vision of Divinity. According to Visishtâdvaitins, God *essential* is embodied in Attributes, Person and Glory. By grace, endowed with spiritual sight, the transcendent Vision of God as He is, is realised in His representations, the Images. Man as he is constituted can only gather ideas from sensible objects; and such a thing as an idea of the *abstract* God is impossible, without the embodiment thereof by Person, Graces and Glories, the Person revealing the others by its medium. A sensible representation to the mind is the most natural, and the stepping-stone in the ladder to higher meditations. Yogi S. Pârthâsârathi embodies this truth as contained in Bhâgavata x-10-37 (*satvam* &c.), in the following verse :—

"Sire! had this Thy Pure Form not been,
Gloom-breaking wisdom couldn't exist.
Through qual'ties man' fest, Thou art known,
And *these* Thy Form makes manifest."

[P. 149 Tatva-traya].

Cp: (*b*) "Lastly, we may think of Our Lord in *human form* looking down upon our probation from the Heavenly Throne."

["Thoughts on Personal Religion" by Goulburn].

Max Muller in the Preface to his Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, P: x: remarks thus;—"What is most curious is that a philosopher, such as Ṣaṅkara, the most decided monist, and the upholder of Brahman as a neuter, as the cause of all things, is reported to have been a worshipper of idols and to have seen in them, despite of all their hideousness, symbols of the Deity, useful, as he thought, for the ignorant even though they have no eyes as yet to see what is hidden behind the idols, and what was the true meaning of them."

A Christian writer, Frances Lord,—we were struck to find, writing thus: —"The white man does not make a wooden idol and call it his god, burning incense to it, asking its advice, praying its protection; but is he any nearer getting conscious help out of his notion of a "God who is spirit," than the savage whom he pities so much, gets out of his wooden image?"

[P: 5 Christian-Science Healing].

(*c*) Form captivates men's hearts more than anything. All ecstatics had Visions of God in Form. Lucretia of Aretine tells us 'that she could perform greater wonders on the human heart by the dexterous management of her personal charms, than all the philosophers,

TOPIC 164.

Service to God the Highest End of man.

What constitutes the highest spiritual ambition of man? Possession of God. What does this imply? Absolute submission to Him. What again does this imply? Doing to our Lord and Master, eternal service as becometh a liege and servant to Him; as befitting the eternal tie subsisting between Him and His creatures. This ultimate solution of the Problem of Life is enunciated in a verse which Nambiḷḷai used to repeat.

आत्माभिमानानुगुणपुरूषार्थव्यवस्थया ।
भगवत्पारतंत्र्यादिप्रबुद्धस्यसुखायते ॥

"That soul indeed has reached bliss,
Which hath its nature realized:
Its nature:—' Dependence on God';
Its end:—'ternal service to Him.'[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: IX. P: 4037: "Uṛuvadu" ix. 4-4.]

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astrologers, alchemists, necromancers, sorcerers, and witches, of the known or unknown world, could by their cunning practices effect."

["Burton's Melancholy Anatomized" p: 192; Ch: vi].

(*d*) In one of his most loving letters to me, that d. 11th August 1900, my Guru, Yogi S. Pârthasâra-thi enlightens me thus:—"The Divine Figure is the centre of gravity of Heaven. Just as the magnetic needle is ever attracted towards the pole, all the universe is ever attracted towards it as its absolute centre of gravity." Speaking of the *Vigrahas* (Persons, Forms) of God, Shishir Kumâr Ghose says:—"These Forms were we believe presented to the minds of the saints, who longed to see Him. [Vol II Lord Gauranga, p: b. Preface."

1. Cp: (*a*) "Oh, that I were able to serve Thee all the days of my life! that I were able to serve Thee truly, though but for one day! Thou art everlastingly worthy of all service, all honour and all praise! Thou art my gracious Lord, and I am Thy poor vassal, under infinite obligations to serve Thee with all my strength and perpetually to celebrate Thy glorious name. To do this is the sole wish and desire of my heart; and whatever ability is wanting in me to accomplish it, do Thou in much mercy supply!

* * * *

"Oh, happy and honorable service, that makes man truly free

TOPIC 165.

Service, sooner than love, to God excites His Grace.

To be more of the character of a servant is better fitted to win the master's mercy than to be objects of love like children to their father. Children but inherit portions of the master's property but servants become objects of his strong affection. The former is but a material gain, whereas the latter is a superior spiritual gain. Once, Pillai Akalanka-Brahma-Râya (the disciple of Kûratt-âzhvân) unwittingly offended his Guru's scion, the holy Bhattârya. Bhattârya in consequence left Srîrangam for Tirukkôttiyûr. Râya was anxious to conciliate with Bhattar. For this purpose he thought of mediating with him through one Irukai-mada-vâranan—weaver in chief to Lord Ranga—whom he knew to be a most intimate servant of Bhattârya. He was despatched on the peace-mission. The servant opportunely plied Bhattar with coaxing language, which pacified and pleased him so much as to deign to forgive Râya. Observers remarked to Bhattar what an exemplary servant Vâranan must have been to bring about an event like this? To which Bhattar said:—"No wonder.

and truly holy! Oh, blessed privilege of filial adoption, that numbers him with the family of heaven, makes him equal to the angels, and renders him terrible to evil spirits and delightful to all that are sanctified! Oh service for ever to be desired and embraced, in which alone we can recover the divine life we have lost and enjoy the supreme and everlasting good!"

[Imit: Chi: Thomas à Kempis: Ch: viii. Bk iii].

(*b*) "Where shall we find a man that is willing to serve God *gratis*?" [Ibid].

(*c*) Service to God is not servility nor is it forced as in the case of worldly service. It is a service full of delight flowing from love. This question is dealt with in sentence 52 of Lokâchârya's Mumukshuppadi; 1st Division; "The Blest Mantra." Says Seneca: 'Parere Deo libertas est'='To obey God is true liberty.' Read Dr F. W. Faber's Creator and Creature. Ch. III Bk. I Pages 93 ff. Yogi S. Pârthasârathi defines salvation: "to be the state of eternally doing, with cheerful devotion, God's will alone."

[Tatva-Traya. P. 138]

He is a born servant, (*i. e.* His very nature is made for service) which conquers all."

[Bhag : Vish : Bk : IX. P. 4051-52 "Aḍiyân" ix. 4-10].

TOPIC 166.

To love-lorn saints, to forget God is impossible:

In moments of desertion by God, the anguish of the heart becomes insupportable, and solace is sought for by diverting the mind to seek fellowship with things abounding in created nature. But in thus seeking forgetfulness, the very things chosen for diversion serve to prove as incentives to remind of God. In such a love-smitten mood did our saint Nammâzhvâr carol a lay as follows, addressing a Kôkila bird:—[1]

[இன்னுயிர்:] "Hark, Köil-bird! distress thou not my soul,
By thy and thy consort's cooings of love.
For ye bid not my soul's Lord, Krishṇa, come;
Thou Bustlest so to rape my soul for Him?"[2]

[T.V.M : ix-5-1. "*Innuyir*"].

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1. The black or Indian Cuckoo, *Cucubus Indicus.*

2. Cp : Râmâyaṇa : ix (Kishkindhâ). 1st canto.

"Hark, the loved koil swells his throat.
And mocks me with his joyfull note.
I hear the happy wild-cock call
Beside the shady water-fall.
His cry of joy afflicts my breast
By love's absorbing might possessed.
* * * *
Each bird his kindly mate has found
And loved their notes of triumph sound.
* * * *
Here in his joy the Koil sings.
There the glad wild-cock flaps his wings.
The blooms of bright Asokas where
The song of wild bees fills the air,
And the soft whisper of the boughs
Increase my longing for my spouse.
* * * *
Each bird in happy love elate,
Rejoices with his darling mate.
But sights like these of joy and peace
My pangs of hopeless love increase

The whole of this Decad (ix-5) was a favourite with our Lord Râmânuja. For once a misunderstanding arose between him and the Temple minstrel-in-chief—Âzhvâr-Tiruvarangap-perumâḷ-Araiyar,—owing to which, he discontinued visiting the Temple (of Raṅganâtha, Ṣrîraṅgam). Araiyar was anxious to appease Râmânuja, and he contrived to send tidings to him on a certain day that in the Temple, the above-cited Decad was being conducted as service that day. Râmânuja instantly rose and attended the service. Peace was thus re-established. So much was his love for this Decad.

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. IX. P. 4059. "*Innuyir*" ix-5].

TOPIC 167.

Insatiable Love to God.

Amorous of God, St. Nammâzhvâr warbled out a ditty such as the following:—

"As dote I on the Lord of Katkarai,
Whose streets with scarlet lily are perfum'd,
My heart for His wonderful Graces melts
How then can I, my restless love suppress?

[T. V. M: IX. 6. 1].

A question rose as to whether the Decad beginning with this ditty imports the ravishment ensuing from the Saint's union with his Lord or it is simply a mere love-effervescing of the heart proceeding from its absorbing contemplation of His graces? Saint Âḷavandâr decided that it is not the outcome of a dual blissful union with Lord as in "Iruttum" (இருத்தும். viii-7-T. V. M), but is only past bliss now memorized by fresh contemplation of His, attributes;—from which however is not

absent a veiled disappointment consequent on the absence of actual union.[1]

[Bhag. Vish: Bk IX, P 4093. "Urugum" ix-6-1].

TOPIC 168.

Possessing the soul in patience for realising God.

Sitrâḷkonḍân said :—" Between realizing God in actuality and His presenting Himself to our inward imagination only, when we meditate on Him, is a long distance. To wish for the former consummation at the very outset or as soon as the heart begins in the first instance to bloom for him, is like opening a shop and making announcements to the public that clothes are ready for sale while yet the cotton is lying raw in its pod on the tree." [2]

[Bhag. Vish : Bk. IX ; P. 4139 : "Teḷi-viṣumbu" ix. 7-5]

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1. Cp : " This heart, that cannot rest,
Shall thine for ever prove ;
Though bleeding and distress'd
Yet joyful in thy love."

[Madame Guyon].

'Flames of encircling love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through :
'Tis fill'd with sacred joy yet press'd
With sacred sorrow too."

[Ibid].

2. Cp : Protestant Theologians draw this distinction between the *just man* and the *saint* : "The *just man* or man who has been justified, obeys the precept of Jesus when He said, 'Come to Me'. The *saint* or man who has been sanctified, goes one step further. He answers to the invitation which says, " Abide in me and I will abide in thee." [The Psychology of the Saints, by H. Joly] Cp: our Bh : Gitâ. with Râmânuja's Commentary Verses. 28 & 29 of Adhyâya ix. Also consider the several stages of the Godward pilgrim concisely described in xi. 54. *Ibid.*

(*a*) Mrs. A. B. writes under date 23rd Jan. 1900. Coconada :—" Impatience blurs the sight. Give time for the heart-lotus to open. You destroy it when you try to tear its leaves apart. Have courage, poor bleeding soul ! the light will come."

(*b*) 'Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou didst already possess Me. Therefore do not be uneasy when I seem still far off.'
[Selections from Pascal's Thoughts, by H. L. S. Lear p : 59].

TOPIC 169.

A moment's absence of God is an age of pang to love-lorn Saints.

In their progress towards God, saints pass through various stages of love. They languish with love in His absence, and resort to competent messengers (= spiritual guides qualified to intercede with God) to fly to Him and pour before Him the song of their sorrow at His desertion and the tidings of the flame consuming them. The messengers depart; but during the interval caused by their absence, the lovers will not endure but plaintively burst forth again with cries of: " when shall we join Thee, Lord, again ?." Nor doth it stop here. The time seems magnified into eternities, and every object which some time before contributed to give pleasure to sense and mind, seems like an instrument of torture wantonly designed to aggravate the lover's sufferings. [1] Nambi Tiruvarañga-Nârâyaṇa-Dâsar, a disciple of Nambiḷḷai, attended the latter's lectures on Love to God, based on St. Nammâzhvâr's Holy Hymnal, the

1. Cp: (*a*) Bhartri-hari :—

विश्रम्यविश्रम्यवनद्रुमाणां
छायासुतन्वीविचचारकाचित् ।
स्तनोत्तरीयेनकरोद्धृतेन
निवारयन्तीशशिनोमयूखान् ॥

=The love-stricken maiden would in the moonlight sit in the shades of trees, and try to avert the (to her) *scorching* rays of the moon by shading herself with her garment.

(*b*) " In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow,
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now;
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me."

[Madame Guyon].

(*c*) Cp: " क्षणोपितेयद्विरहोऽतिदुस्सहः ॥

[Stotra-Ratna. v-56]

Tiruvâi-mozhi. Peṭṛi was a disciple of Nañjîyar, the Master of Nambiḷḷai. Dâsar happening one day to visit Peṭṛi, the latter asked what delightful discourses he heard that day from Nambiḷḷai. 'This day,' said Dâsar, 'we have completed the Hymn: "Aṛukkum" [T.V.M. ix-8], descriptive of the (said) Saint's aspirations to join God. Dâsar said: "The next Hymn: "Malligai" [T.V.M. ix. 9] will reveal to you a novel feature in the Saint's pangs of love, when in the small space of an evening, he doth suffer an age of anguish." "Âḷavandâr explained,"—so taught Tirumâlay-ândân—"that the saint suffered as much, as in a night the cowherdesses of Brindâvan suffered, owing to Lord Krishna's deserting them." "No," 'interrupted Râmânuja (disciple of Âṇḍân), "say rather that in the *small* space of an evening, he suffered all; for, how could so love-lorn a Saint as Nammâzhvâr have had strength enough to keep him alive in his pang of separation for (to him) an eternally long night?"

[Bhag: Vish: Bk. IX. 4178; "Malligai" ix-9]

TOPIC 170.

Mind fickle and lustful.

To curb the fickle and lustful nature of the mind is the greatest feat a mortal can perform. While men like Purûravas made great sacrifices for obtaining houris of paradise for carnal enjoyment, Arjuna, when the beautiful Nymph Urvaṣî, of the Immortals, stood before him in all the attractiveness of her charms and wooed him for intercourse, had the strength of mind to resist the temptation, and even to cast himself at her feet worshipping her as his mother [1]. Even he however complained to Lord Kṛishṇa [in Bhagavadgîta: vi-34] as follows:—

1. (*a*) This story may be read in Mahâ-Bhârata, Vana-Parva xlvi-19. The following stanza is to the point: (the very opposite of which, of how a weak-minded creature easily goes mad with women is

"Slayer of Madhu! yet again, this Yog,
This Peace, derived from equanimity,
Made known by Thee—I see no fixity
Therein, no rest, because the heart of men
Is unfixed, Krishṇa! rash, tumultuous,
Wilful and strong. It were all one, I think,
To hold the wayward wind, as tame man's heart."

[Bhag. Vish. Bk. IX. P. 4236. "Mâlai-naṇṇi." ix-10-1]

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found in the story of Purûravas (or Vikrama) and Urvaṣi [Vish: Pur: iv-6]. The stanza referred to is:—

दृष्ट्वैवचोर्वशिंप्राप्तांलज्जावृतविलोचनः ।
पादाभिवंदनंकृत्वागुरुपूजांप्रयुक्तवान् ॥

(b) Cp: Venkatâdri Svâmi, a great Vaishṇava devotee, of whom many miracles are related, and who lived about A.C 1870 in Ṣrîrangam, was once in Kanchi (Little Conjeevaram) on a visit to the Holy Lord Varadarâja. He lived a celebate hermit's life. He was in full vigour, youth and health. The vagabonds of the place sent the best beauty of the place to seduce him so as to violate his chastity when he should be alone. She, on a pleasant moonlight night, came rigged out in all her finery and perfume; and prepared with every art, which only a harlot knows how to ply to ensnare men's minds. She set at work all her infamous engines to assault his virtue. The Svâmi, as soon as he saw her phantom, imagined it to be the Mother of the Universe—the Consort of Varadarâja—come there in answer to his prayers and to bless him. He danced before her for joy with songs of praise tuned to his lyre, (his constant companion.) [Vide His Life in Telugu by S. Râja Row Nâyudu, Ṣrîniketana Press. Madras; 1897].

(c) Once St. Bernard happened to fix his eyes on the face of a woman; but immediately reflecting that this was a temptation, he ran to a pond, and leaped up to the neck into the water, which was then as cold as ice, to punish himself, and to vanquish the enemy. On another occasion, an impudent woman assaulted him; but he drove her out of his chamber with the utmost indignation" [Butler's Lives of Saints Vol. viii; P: 280].

(d) "In the beginning of his conversion, finding himself assailed with violent temptations of concupiscence, he (St. Francis Assisi) often cast himself into ditches full of snow." [Butler's Lives of Saints. Vol x. P: 108].

(e) "They secretly introduced one of the most beautiful and most insinuating young strumpet of the

TOPIC 171.

The Passion-Crisis of the heart for God.

Nañjîyar asked Bhattârya:—"God-sire! how is it that Saint Tirumangai Âzhvâr calls on the Lords of many Holy Places—*all* of them in a single centum of his great Hymnal [viz., Periya Tirumozhi: 10-1 "Oru-Narchutram".] ?

Bhattârya: "Son! knowest thou not that when a damsel is given in marriage, a time comes when she must leave her parental roof for that of her husband? And that before her leaving the roof of her parents, in order to go to the mansion of her husband, she must go to *all* her relations and friends to take leave of them? So doth our saint, when his time for departing to heaven approached, take leave of all the Worshippable Lords manifest in many Shrines on earth, who were the means of kindling and nourishing his love for God in Heaven.[1]

[Bhag: Vish, Bk. X: P: 4265. Kedum-idar" x-2-1]

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country into his (St. Thomas Aquino's) chamber, promising her a considerable reward in case she should draw him into sin. She employed all the arts of Satan to succeed in so detestable a design. The saint, alarmed and affrighted at the danger, profoundly humbled himself, and cried out to God most earnestly for His protection; then snatching up a firebrand, struck her with it, and drove her out of his chamber" [Butler's Lives of Saints. Vol iii. P: 62].

(*f*) Read Embâr's or Govinda-Jîyar's Life in *Guruparamparâ-prabhâva*, (D. V.) to be English translated.

1. This is like the extraordinary death of a gentleman dying of love on Mount Olivet, after his visiting all the Holy Places in Jerusalem, with his heart deluged in love, related by St. Francis de Sales in Ch. xii, Bk: vii. of his Treatise on *Love of God.*

(*b*) Anent Forms of God as Images Worshippable, or Archâvatâra, the reader is referred to the Learned *Tattva-traya* by Yogi S. Pârthasârathi: Pp. 143ff. Archâvatara or Image-Worship has for us the following advantages:—(1) It is reachable by our senses and the mind; (2) Hence it produces a desire for godliness; (3) As soon as such a desire is produced, it at once serves as Means to lead us to the apogee of spiritual greatness; (4) it serves to inspire the virtues of piety and love for God; and (5) it gives us an opportunity, even while we are in the midst of our world-enemy to practice service, which we aim

at performing in reality when we reach Heaven and there are face to face with God!

(c) Our Saint Nammâzhvâr had —while he contemplated on the manifestations of the Lord in His Worshippable Form at several Holy Places—presented to his consciousness the several auspicious attributes of God as Holy subjects for his meditation, thus:—

Name of the Holy Shrine & of the Lord.	Aspect and Attribute meditated on.
1. Şrîrangam or Kôil (Lord Ranganâtha).	Love of God to man by condescending to emanate from his Vyûha state [*vide* note: on Kshîrâbdhi. Intro: to Holy Lives of Drâvida Saints.]
2. Tiru-malai or Tirupathi. (Lord Venkaţeşa).	The Lord as indwelling in all hearts.
3. Tiruk-kurugûr. (Lord Âdinâtha).	As the Universal Lord.
4. Tiruk-kurungudi (Lord Nambi in 5 postures).	As representative of Avatâras (=Vibhava).
5. Srî-varamangalam. (Lord Daivanâyaka).	As Holy Feet, our Means of salvation.
6. Tiruk-kudandai. (Lord Şârnga-pâņi).	As the Lord melting the hearts of those who have renounced all minor gods.
7. Tiru-vallavâzh. (Lord Kôlap-pirân).	As Sole Protector.
8. Tiru-vaņ-vandûr. (Lord Şesha-şâyî).	As the Lord who guards the heart from all the temptations and attractions of the world.
9. Tiru-viņ-ņagaram. (Lord Uppiliyappan).	As the Lord who by His power affords solace for pining hearts, and renders them fit for service.
10. Tirut-tulai-villi-mangalam. (Lord Aravinda-lochana).	As Father and Mother multiplied.
11. Tiruk-kôļûr. (Lord Nikshepa-vitta).	As a place which, to souls aspiring for God, lends itself as the most agreeable place for residence.
12. Ten-tirup-pêrai. (Lord Makarâyata-Karņa-Paşa).	Love-inspiring Beauty.

13. Tiruvâran-viḷai (Lord Tiruk-kuraḷ-appan).	Beauty such as prevents the mind rambling to any other heaven.
14. Tiruk-kuḷandai. (Lord Mâyak-kûttan).	Captivating Beauty such as will embolden the soul to set the world's opinions at naught.
15. Tiruvaṇ-pariṣâram. (Lord Tiruk-kuraḷ-appan).	Tenderness which makes the soul forget fatigue.
16. Tiruch-chengunrûr. (Lord Imaiy-avar-appan).	Manliness which drives away all dread.
17. Tiruk-kaḍittânam. (Lord Adbhuta-Nârâyaṇa).	Love, as between parent and child, permitting familiarity.
18. Tirup-puliyûr. (Lord Mâyap-pirân).	The love of the bridegroom for his bride.
19. Tirup-puḷingudi (Lord Kâyṣina-vêndan). 20. Tiru-varaguṇa-mangai. (Lord Vijayâsana). 21. Tiru-vaikundam. (Lord Vaikuṇṭha-nâtha).	The Three Holy Places where the Lord evokes in the devotee the three stages of love known as *Para-bhakti*, *Para-jñâna* and *Parama-bhakti*.
22. Tiruk-kâtkarai (Lord kâtkaraiy-appan).	Closest intimacy and abandon, in delights of union.
23. Tiru-mûzhikkaḷam. (Lord Tiru-mûzhikkaḷattân).	As the Asylum Regal to all supplicants.
24. Tiru-nâvây. (Lord Nârâyaṇa).	Mercy and Grace to the devotees.
25. Tiruk-kaṇṇapuram. (Lord Ṣauri-râja)	As Saviour and Heaven-Granter to all refugees.
26. Tiru-môgûr. (Lord Kâḷamegha).	As cool and refreshing to those scorched in the heat of the world.
27. Ananta-ṣayanam. (Lord Ananta-padmanâbha).	As the Lord Impartial to all creatures.
28. Tirumâliruñ-jôlai. (Lord Azhagar or Sundarabâhu).	As Dispeller of ignorance.
29. Tirup-pêr-nagar. (Lord Appak-kudattân).	Willingness to accept all comers.

&c. &c. &c. [P. T. O.]

TOPIC 172

Unswerving Fidelity to One God.

Fidelity to one God cannot permit violation of that virtue by dividing the heart to other gods. God is so jealous that He will permit even non-fidelity to Himself than suffer fidelity, due to Him alone, being transferred to others. Once Lord Raṅganâtha was carried in procession, when it began to rain. He was, for shelter, carried into the premises of another temple —dedicated to some other divinity—at Kîzhaiy-ûr (Jambukeṣvara near Ṣrîraṅgam). Râmânuja and other elders who had accompanied the procession, stopped away outside the premises and in the rain, when some one addressed him thus:—"Sire! Thy Lord has taken shelter inside, why dost thou not do the same"? "Fool thou art," fulminated Râmânuja, "if the Emperor electeth to make love to a courtezan, doth it signify that His chaste Queen also should imitate her Lord by herself resorting to a courtier? (We are like the chaste Queen and cannot do as the Lord doth)."[1]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: X; P. 4299. "Keḍum" x-2-1].

Cp: With *the Table of the* 32 *Upanishad Vidyas* in ourBhagavad-Gîtâ which refer to God's Attributes.

(*d*)" Through His Attributes we can reach Him, touch Him, feel Him; to Him our aspirations can rise, our hearts can be at His Feet. Now an idol is an image which shows symbolically some attribute, or group of attributes of the Supreme, some Person in whom His attributes are seen. Thus an idol of Vishṇu is blue,—the color of the over-arching sky,—has four arms, one for each quarter of space, bears the conch for creative sound, the mace for sovereignty &c."

[Annie Besant on Idolatry p: 66. Hindu College Magazine Vol. I.]

1. Cp: "God sets so high a value and esteem upon this holocaust of our heart, that it is the very one thing precisely He demands of us. "My son," says he, "give me your heart." (*Prov* xxiii-26.) As the eagle, the prince of birds, feeds only upon the heart, so what God most regards is the heart: and in case you bestow not this upon him, it is not in your power to bestow any other present which can give him satisfaction. Nor is it indeed any great thing he demands of us. For, if we, who are but dust and ashes, cannot be fully satisfied with all things God has created; and if there is nothing, except God alone, can fill this

TOPIC 173.

God Himself the fulfilment of His Law.

On a certain occasion, Lord Raṅganâtha was taken out in procession, in imitation of the exploit of a King going out on a hunting excursion. It was now evening by the river-side, when it was time for the Twice-born (Brâhmaṇas) to retire for evening Prayer (Sandhyâ). When a few announced their intention to Bhattârya to leave the procession and go for the Evening Prayer, Bhâttarya was immersed in ecstatic contemplation of the Lord, beautifully manifest in His Image. On being pressed again, he petulantly observed:—"Brothers! supposing we depart a bit from the punctual rigid observance of our sacerdotal routine, inasmuch as our present occupation, viz. of meditative attention to our Soverign Himself here visibly present, answers it—or in other words, supposing we forego the Law inasmuch as we are occupied with the Law-Giver Himself—do ye therefore think that Yama, the God-appointed Punisher of the breakers of that Law, will accuse us as Law-

heart of ours, as little as it is, how do you imagine you can satisfy God in giving him but a part of your heart, and reserving the rest to yourself? To pretend this, is only to abuse Him, since our heart cannot be divided in this manner. "For the bed is so narrow," says Isaias, "that the one or the other must necessarily fall out and the cloak so short that it cannot cover both at once." (Isa. xxviii-20). The heart of a man is a narrow bed, it cannot contain any, besides God alone. And it is for this reason that the spouse calls it a little bed. "I will search," says she, "all night in my little bed Him whom my heart loves" (Cant. iii-1.) She has made the bed of her heart so narrow, that there is only place left for her Beloved. And, on the contrary, he who enlarges his heart to that extent, as to admit place for another, at the same time leaves no room for God, and expels Him thence. It is of this division of our heart, which God complains in the Prophet Isaias, when He says, "you have discovered yourself near Me to receive an adulterer; you have enlarged your bed, and have contracted an alliance with others." (Isa. vii-8).

[Rodriguez on Christian and Religious Perfection; Vol I. p: 396].

breakers, and hold us liable for treason?[1] Supposing a King holds court to hear reports of the workings of his kingdom; and if in course of that hearing, mention be made, by the reporter, of one who is the king's own favorite; and then supposing the king orders his reporter to omit that item and pass on, durst the reporter thence forward mention the favorite's name again[2] to the king? When we are here busy with the King directly, what other business can draw us away from Him? All ordinary law is set aside before the Highest Law, Himself."

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4301. "Keḍum" x-2-1].

TOPIC 174.

A sign which differentiates the saint from the ordinary man.

Nañjîyar used to relate:—"My master Bhattârya with his friend Piḷḷai Tirunaṛaiyûr Araiyar entered the Holy Place (Ananta-puram=Trivendram), and I followed them. There were others who went past in haste and hurry, whereas these Masters strolled about leisurely, enjoying the sight of the high mansions,

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1. Cp: "Ye foolish and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?". [Matt: xxiii-17].

"Ye blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" [Ibid: xxiii-19]. "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone," [Ibid: xxiii-23.]

"Blind guides, who strain out a a gnat to swallow a camel."

2. When one loves, and is loved by God, he is become His favorite and goes beyond the law of retributive justice. Such regenerate soul can cry:—

"Oh grave! where is thy victory, O death, where is thy sting?." Cp: Yama, God of Death, whispering, in fear, into the ears of his emissaries: "Keep clear of the worshippers of Madhusûdana. I am the lord of all men, the Vaishṇavas excepted." * * * * * He who through holy knowledge diligently adores the Lotus-Feet of that Hari, who is reverenced by the gods, is released from all the bonds of sin; and you must avoid him, as you would avoid fire fed with oil."

[Vish: Pur; iii-7-13 ff].

turrets and towers lining the streets, as if 'drinking them in with their eyes.' And I admired them thus, thinking within myself:—'Look, what a difference between them and the throng, in this respect, though in other respects they are one'!

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4312. "Keḍum" x-2-2].

TOPIC 175.

All things thrive under God's Grace.

When Tiruvâli-nâḍu-Dâsar presented Bhattârya with some fine areca-nuts, Bhattar seeing them exclaimed:—"How excellent they seem! They must surely be nuts grown by the watering and under the fostering care of the grace of the Lord of Tiruppuliyûr, (as chanted by St. Nammâzhvâr in T. V. M. VIII-9-6 "Tiruv-aruḷ").[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4322. "Puṇṇiyam" x-2-5].

TOPIC 176.

God, the Fountain of Holiness; or the Power of His sanctifying Grace.

Nañjîyar asked Bhattârya:—"Godsire! What qualification is needed to be able to recite God's names?.

Bhattârya:—Son! Dost thou not know that when a man stumbles on the road, he cries out at once "Mamma"? (To cry 'Mamma' then, tell me, what qualification is needed?). He who goes to bathe in the Holy Gaṅga (River Ganges), indeed needs not cleanse himself beforehand by dipping in a salt-water

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1 (a) The opposite of this, that nothing can flourish without God's eye of grace, (in other words when His grace is withdrawn) finds an illustration in.—"May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away," [Matt: xxi-19]. When God's grace is bestowed it will be like: "Do not fear, but speak, and hold not thy peace." (9). "Because I am with thee" (10.) [Acts. xviii].

(b) Read the vicissitudes in the lives of King Naḷa and King Hariś-chandra and of Job.

pool![1] So, when we wish to be saved, what more qualification do we require than simply to desire it and forthwith fly to the Saviour! A Saviour who is fit to save us, can certainly render us fit also (or prepare us in all due manner) for salvation. He can certainly, if he will, both sanctify and justify us in His eyes. When we go to a pure fountain, is not the fountain itself the purifier?

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4322 "Puṇṇiyam" x-2-5].

TOPIC 177.

The worm-ful body and atheism.

The body is a loathsome abomination, if only one would turn its inside out and examine the contents.[2] Then, no body's teaching would be needed to detest it. And yet, our long habituation with it is the cause that we love it in spite of the immediate visible evidence that it is disgusting. Why so? A certain merchant was conducted into the presence of Bhattârya with recommendations that he was a master of the Drâvida (Tamil) language. Bhattârya said: "If you wish, friend, to ask me anything, you may ask?"

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1. Cp: Vish: Pur: vi-7-74.

यथाग्निरुद्धतशिखःकक्षंदहतिसानिलः ।
तथाचित्तस्थितोविष्णुर्योगिनांसर्वकिल्बिषम् ॥

"As blazing fire by blowing wind being fanned,
To ash doth ev'ry kind of rubbish turn,
Ev'n so the fire of God in holy hearts,
Burns all their sins with not the slightest trace."

2. Cp: (a) यदिनामास्यकायस्ययदन्तस्तद्बहिर्भवेत् ।
लोकोयंदण्डमादायशुनःकाकांश्चवारयेत् ॥

i.e. "If inside out be body turn'd
't will be so nauseating found,
A rod in hand would needed be
To ward off dogs and crows that glee." [Mahâ-Bhârata].

(b) "மாக்கேழ் மடநல்லா யென்றரற்றும் சான்றவர்
நோக்கார்கொல் நொய்யதோர் புக்கில்லை
யாக்கைக்கோ ரீச்சிறகன்னதோர் தோலறினும் வேண்டுமே
காக்கை கடிவதோர் கோல்." [Nâladiyâr].

Merchant: "Sire! Some say that besides the visible body, there is nothing like what is called 'soul,' there is no moral order, and there is no God.[1] Others say, this body is transient, and admit its feculent nature; and therefore they say we must aim at something permanent beyond the body. What, pray, gives rise to these two different opinions?"

Bhattârya answered:—"The Lord hath told us in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ:—

" * * * * Hard it is
To pierce the veil divine of various shows
Which hideth Me; yet they who worship Me
Pierce it and pass beyond." [vii-14].

To pure hearts, therefore, God gives sufficient enlightenment to be able to realize the detestable nature of the body, and thence to endeavour to rid oneself of it; but to sinful hearts, love for body persists, and as a consequence to, in its company, commit further abominations. Thus doth God weigh us in His scales of justice, each according to his merits and demerits (*Karma*).[2]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4323, "Puṇṇiyam" x-2-5].

" Idle fop! thy lady-love,
" *A beauty* dost thou call?
But see that evil house of love
Is lot. Why! let befall
A fly-wing scratch on outer skin,*
Thou needst, to scare the crow, begin."

* The meaning is that even a scratch on the cuticle as faint as the thinness of the wing of a fly is enough to expose the hatefulness of the body.

(c) "[illegible]."

[Ibid].

" Turn thou the sack from inside out,
Its foul contents then thou wilt see."

(d) "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things."

[Solomon's Wisdom. ix-15].

1. Read here the interesting Chapter II of Solomon's Wisdom containing the reasonings of the atheists (or the Chârvaks); and Solomon's defence of the Godly contained in Ch: III ff.

2. A near correspondence to this topic is found in an argument (Pas-

TOPIC 178.

Authoritative teaching alone carries weight.

All spiritual teaching has value when it proceeds from recognised authority. Hence the importance of every constituted church and of truths traditionally handed down. Lord Kṛishṇa, though an Avatâr, yet, inasmuch as he suspected that men may not receive his teachings, because of his kinship with herdsmen, enjoined Arjuna to go to his recognized Elders for spiritual instruction, for whom he had respect and veneration. For the Lord said in the Gîtâ:—

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cal's Thoughts, Pp. 5 & 6]:—"How can such as the following occur to a reasoning man?:—

"I know not who has sent me into the world, nor what the world is, nor what I myself am; I am terribly ignorant of everything; I know not what my body is nor my senses, nor my soul, nor even that part of me which thinks what I say, which reflects on all and on itself, yet is as ignorant of itself as of all beside. I see those dreadful spaces of the universe which close me in, and I find myself fixed in one corner of this vast expanse without knowing why I am set in this place rather than elsewhere, nor why this moment of time given me for life is assigned to this point rather than another of the whole eternity which was before me or which shall be after me. I see nothing but infinities on every side, which close me round as an atom, and as a shadow which endures but for an instant and returns no more. I know only that I must shortly die, but what I know the least is this very death which I cannot avoid.

"As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I go; only this I know that on departing this world, I shall either fall for ever into nothingness or into the hands of an offended God, without knowing which of these two conditions shall eternally be my lot. Such is my state full of weakness and uncertainty; from all which I conclude that I ought to pass all the days of my life without thought of searching for what must happen to me. Perhaps I might find some ray of light in my doubts but I will not take the trouble, nor stir a foot to seek it, and after treating with scorn those who are troubled with this care, I will go without foresight and without fear to make trial of the grand event, and allow myself to be led softly on to death, uncertain of the eternity of my future condition."

Who would wish to have for his friend a man who should thus speak; who would choose him rather than another for advice in business; who would turn to him in sorrow and indeed to what use in life could we put him?"

[Read the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Holy Bible].

" By prostrations, by fair questionings and by (reverential) service, to truth-seeing Saints, learn; for they shall teach thee wisdom." [iv-34].

The Lord also exhorted Dharmaputra to learn all Truths from Bhîshma, who lay on his death-bed of arrows, and was about to depart from this world. For He said:—

'The sun of Bhîshma, Kuru-Chief!
Oh, setting, light of wisdom too
Shall wane and leave the world in night.
Abjure I thee, hasten and learn.'

[Mahâ-Bhâ: Ṣânti: Parva 46-23].

Bhattârya was accustomed to cite the words of Pariñâi-appar that: " unless the custodian of an article is a person of worth, the article loses its value both in the hands of the giver and the taker."[1]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X. P. 4334. " Kedum-idar " x-2-9].

TOPIC 179.

God with us, is success. God away, is failure.

God's presence, is our strength; His absence, our weakness. Arjuna's successes all through the war of the Mahâ-Bhârata and all his other exploits on earth and in paradise, crowned as they were with victory, were due to Lord Krishṇa ever remain-

1. Cp: (*a*) " * * the Holy Spirit specially resides, animating the body of the church, and speaking by the mouth of the bishops "

[Fr: de Sale's Treatise on Love of God]

(*b*) This is called Upadeṣa-ṣuddhi—the Purity of the Teacher and the Purity of the Teaching; or the Torch of knowledge handed down from one Qualified Teacher to another. Otherwise it has no gravity. Yogi Pârthasârathi, my Guru, sends me (in his letter dated. 22-11-900) the following to be added:—

" The Torch of Light Revealed—
Inherited,
In *all its* pureness from the Fountain-Head."

ing by his side and aiding him.[1] But as soon as the Lord's glorious spirit flew back to the spiritual region, Arjuna found all his power departing from him. For when Arjuna was conducting all the 16,000 ladies safe from Dvâraka to Indraprastha, he was waylaid by robber-hordes, and all the women were captured and carried away. Arjuna lifted up his famous Gânḍîva-bow to scare the robbers away and protect the ladies. But the bow refused to obey him nor had he the strength of his arm to use it, as heretofore he had. And he exclaimed in grief:—

" Like gifts bestowed on wrong persons,
The same my bow, the arrows same,
The horses same and car the same,
But all no good when He has left "[2]
[Bhag. Vish. Bk. X. P. 4363:—" Vîva nin" x-3-3].

TOPIC 180.

Bhakti and Prapatti contrasted.

The best means to salvation is God Himself. Even this is two-fold. One is by *Bhakti* or loving Him with all the energy of one's own will; the other by *Prapatti* or loving him with all the force derived from God Himself when the aspirant has resigned his own will, and placed all his hope and confidence in the sweet will and dispensations of Providence. In the former case, incessant training and turning of the will to devotional meditation on God—demanding much individual effort—and which has to be performed strictly in accordance with prescribed modes,—and modes demanding qualification such as birth in holy families, rigid preliminaries, and careful watching

1. Cp: " Do not fear, but speak, and hold not thy peace. (9) Because I am with thee " (10) [Acts. XVIII].

2. Read Mahâ-Bhâ. Mausala-Parva 7th Ch: for full account.

against the slightest omissions in observance &c—are required; whereas in the latter case neither individual effort nor conditions of birth &c are requisites where a soul in whole-hearted devotion unreservedly throws itself into the loving and caring hands of God.[1] The former (Bhakti) is attended with danger inasmuch as when lacking any of the conditions imposed upon one, who would thus rise by his own strength of will, he renders himself liable not to be accepted by God, whereas in the latter case (Prapatti), the aspirant so unconditionally surrenders himself to God, and so confidently seeks shelter under His protecting wings, that even God, after giving him such protection, cannot cast him away. In the former case (Bhakti), God does not bind Himself to save, whereas in the latter case (Prapatti), He binds Himself to save. Conditions for the former (Bhakti) are untiring devotion and unceasing worship &c., on the part of the creature—the use of self-will; whereas conditions for the latter (Prapatti) are implicit trust and effacement of self-will and proneness to the complete operation of God's will alone. The former (Bhakti) is a slender stream of love proceeding from puny efforts, a creature is capable of producing in his heart; and this is necessarily subject to many accidents; but the latter (Prapatti) is the mighty flood of Grace pouring down from God the Creator, nothing withstanding the rush of the torrent. Bhakti requires pumping up with exertion; whereas Prapatti brings down His Grace in all natural downpour.

Âḷavandâr—according to Tirumâlai-Âṇdân's exposition—interpreted St. Nammâzhvâr's Hymn: "Vîḍumin" [Tiruvâi-mozhi I-2nd Dec.], as teaching the Doctrine of God's absolute

1. Cp. And Peter opening his mouth said: In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of presons. "But in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to Him." [Acts. XI. 34-35].

Free Grace or the Doctrine of *Prapatti.* Râmânuja, their disciple, followed this teaching until he wrote Ṣrî Bhâshya or the Commentaries on Bâdarâyana's Brahma-Sûtras; after which he put the construction that the Hymn taught *Bhakti*, or sustained exertion of man's will directed to loving devotion on the Lord. Asked the reason for changing his attitude, Râmânuja said that the Doctrine of Grace was too holy to be exposed to the profane gaze of all mankind without reference to their preparedness to receive the same; that it could be effective only when imparted to those who were in heart sufficiently mature to be inclined to receive, assimilate and act upon the Doctrine; as otherwise it would be a case of 'pearls thrown before the swine'. Hence he saw reasons to carefully screen the doctrine from the eyes of the undeserving. Therefore it was that Râmânuja saw fit to construe the particular Hymn of our Saint Nammâzhvâr (alluded to above) as revelational of *Bhakti*, or as that means of reaching God which lays on the soul incessant self-strife, or assiduous application of its own mental energy to meditation. Râmanuja's object in interpreting the said Hymnal as not intending the Doctrine of *Prapatti* (or entire surrender of the soul to God; and faith and trust in Him, as against the weakness and inadequacy of self-effort) but as intending the Doctrine of *Bhakti* only, was that without the change of the heart leading it to entirely sacrifice itself for God, Prapatti would but land the soul in moral turpitude and spiritual bewilderment. Either one must sedulously strive to advance towards God with all the ethical and religious self-preliminary involved in Bhakti or by the holocaust of his heart—than which no greater price can be demanded—and leave full scope for the operation of God's free grace. A misunderstanding of the nature of either of these modes of reaching God must retard

the soul in its rapid prosecution of the end of its high divine destiny.[1] What Râmânuja hid from the profane in this work, he divulged in his work named Ṣaraṇâgati-Gadya.[2]

[Bhag: Vish. Bk. X., P. 4410. "Ṣârve" x-4].

TOPIC 181.

The Ways of God in Saving souls; and Love-privileges enjoyed by the Blest.

The reciprocality of love between Creator and creature is determined by the following considerations:

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1. In connection with this topic, we invite the reader to peruse Foot-note 1. Pp: 563-4, to our Engl: Trans: of Gita, with Râmânuja's commentaries, where we held out a promise to treat largely on this subject in a separate work. That may now be considered as fulfilled in this Book. There we wrote:—"Râmânuja gives here the ordinary interpretation meaning *Bhakti*, whereas a higher interpretation is *Prapatti*. An attempt will be made to elucidate this subject in my Second Volume; but in the meanwhile the reader is referred to the most valuable Table appended at the end of this work, where he can generally gather some accouut as to how *Prapatti* differs from *Bhakti*."

[Also read Pp: 22?ff. Ibid, and P: 379ff. Ibid].

Bhakti is living to self and attaining God.

Prapatti is dying to self and obtaining God.

2. (*a*) Read the learned Introduction to this work by Sage Periya-v-Acchân-biḷḷai written in Maṇi-

pravâḷa. (Samskṛit + Drâvid).

(*b*) Read also Prapanna-Pârijâta, the Engl. Trans: of which has appeared in the columns of the Brahmavâdin.

Cp: 'There are others, who desiring Christian perfection, seek it by their own strength, which is utter weakness or by their own industry and spiritual exercises; and not from God in distrust of self, and so they go backward rather than forward' [P. 201. Supplement to Spiritual Combat by Lorenzo Scupoli.]

Also Cp: "Sow nothing of thyself; but offer the ground of thy heart cleared of everything; for then he will sow His own seed therein according to His good pleasure; and so shall it bring forth fruit. Remember always that He will have this soul of thine to be solitary and detached from all things, that He may unite it to Himself. Leave Him alone to choose thee; impede him not by thy free will." [Inward Peace. P: 216. by Lorenzo Scupoli.]

The way of God in the exercise of His Grace, is such that He hides from His creature even Himself—the Author of the grace—and suffers the creature complacently to believe that he deserved grace by his own acts of merit.

In the forest, Lakshmaṇa, of his own free accord, addressed Râma thus:—

"Thou shalt with thy Videhan spouse
Recline upon the mountain's brows;
Be mine the toil, be mine to keep
Watch o'er thee, waking or asleep."

[Râm. ii-31-25].

and yet he recollected that he was not his own master, and petitioned to Râma to grant His permission before he would stir to act on his own behalf, when Râmà said:—

"Some pleasant spot be chosen where
Pure waters gleam and trees are fair."

Lakshmaṇa then responded thus:—

"Select *Thyself* a pleasant spot;
Be mine the care to rear the cot."

[Râm: iii-15-5 to 7].

God being so perfect and so loving that He stands not in need of such ceremony as that His creature should first beg salvation of Him; and yet He chooses to wait and let a spontaneous[1] desire (for salvation) first arise in the breast. God Himself is eager to grant salvation unsolicited, as becomes His High Godship; but he yet choses to see the soul spontaneously turn his face to Him, and fly to Him for embracement, just as the bridegroom who though his heart is throbbing with love for his bride, yet eagerly waits till the bride herself do make a first movement and fly to Him. The pleasure is thus enhanced on both sides. This is the meaning of God *waiting* and soul *moving*.

1. *Spontaneous*, meaning, not by soul's effort, but by God's.

Secondly :—The God's elect are free with God. For Nañjîyar said that he directly heard Bhattârya (his Guru), expatiating on Âḷavandâr's Hymn, verse 42,[1] thiswise :

'Senâpati is the Archangel and Premier Chamberlain to God. He is robed in the robes of state, carries the fan (the sign and the privilege of royalty), and holds the baton (symbol of authority). Unbid, he can enter the private chambers where the Lord and His Consort are in the full *abandon* of their love. The Lord taketh no offence at his entry, for he is the Lord's trusted hoary minister with whom there is neither secrecy nor privacy. Nor do the Holy Consorts retire at his approach. They but suspend their free disport and look all attention from the Royal throne, which with the Lord they share. The Lord too is all attention now to his hoary Minister. Nor is the Minister unaware of the delicate situation. He tarries not longer than absolutely needeed for the transaction of state-business with which he has come charged. He is averse to obtrude at a time when the Lord is absorbed in His recreations. Seneṣa then puts before the Lord the business of the Kosmos in as few and select terms as possible. To the Lord, on the other hand, the audience which He gives to His High Chamberlain is more replete with interest and more a source of delight than any amount of company with His Holy Consorts. When Senâpati, in trite periods of words, submits to the Lord : " Such and

1. त्वदीयभुक्तोज्झितशेषभोजिना
त्वयानिसृष्टात्मभरेणयद्यथा ।
प्रियेणसेनापतिनान्यवेदितत्
तथानुजानन्तमुदारवीक्षणैः ॥

" That Lord of Hosts, to whose counsel — Who feeds on remnants of Thy food—
By glance giv'st graceful Thou assent.,— To whom entrustest Kosmic Rule."

such a one is to be appointed Brahmâ of the spheres, and such and such a Brahmâ is to be transferred &c.," the Lord at once and unquestioningly, signs sanction with his eyes, and says: "As Thou, Father, hast proposed, so be it." Verily is this archaic Archangel dearer to the Lord than Himself!"

When Bhattârya's heart expanded under the delights of dwelling on the profound secrets of God's love as embodied in this Hymn, he fell into paroxysms of joy in the company of Kiḍâmbi-y-âcchân (the body-guard disciple of Râmânuja) and others who happened to be present when this sermon was being delivered. Âcchân was Bhattârya's co-student, and so, great affection they had for each other. Iḷaiy-âzhvâr, the disciple of Âcchân, once asked him what made him love and follow Bhattârya so much more than Bhattârya's own disciples did follow him. To which Âcchân answered:—

"Son, thou art unaware of what took place that day, when Râmânuja placed a book in Bhattârya's hands, led him before Lord Raṅganâtha and there outside the Holy Bar, made him recite a stanza; and looking round, addressed the assembly thus:—'Look on Bhattârya, O my brethren! as ye have looked on myself," [1]

[Bhag : Vish . Bk x. p ; 4469 ff : "Aruḷ" x-6-1]

TOPIC 182.

Salvation sure through our Universal Mother.

The following was Bhattârya's dying exhortation to his disciples:—

'Look at the beauty of our mysteries! Whenever ye recite the Holy Dvaya Mantra, join with it this Holy Hymn of St. Nammâzhvâr:—

1. I have hardly found a parallel to this Topic in the Divine Treatises of the Western Saints.

"Thou Lord, dear to thy Lotus-born Consort, [1]
To me art by that kinship dear,
O Blissful Boar, [2] indeed Thou Saviour art
Save as Thou didst, with tusks, the Earth.

1. About Lakshmî and Her Functions in the Economy of the Spiritual Universe, read Topic No. 17. Lakshmî is our High Priestess—like Christ of the Christians, or such other mediatorial Functionaries appointed by God—who ever appear to us in Heaven and Earth presenting us to, and pleading for us, before Her Spouse the Lord and offering Her all. Sufficient Sacrifice for their sake (Read Ṣîta's doings in Râmâyaṇa for example), like the Lamb (as Christians would say) taking away the sin of the world. She is thus the abiding propitiation for our sins, by Her endless acts of self-oblation. Read the interesting discussion on the beauty of our Priestess's Mediational Function embodied in Part II, *Dvaya-prakaraṇa* of Lokâchârya's Mumukshuppadi[one of the 18 Rahasyas of this Saint]. The pleading with the Lord on the one hand and comforting the souls on the other is by this Sage metaphorically expressed thus:—

She is "like the Mother who cannot leave the cradle of the children on the one side, and cannot leave the bed of Her Lord on the other side."

About the relation of bride and bridegroom between souls and God, the nearest correspondence may be found in the Canticle of Canticles. Our High Priestess Ṣrî (=Bliss) is His dearest Consort, ever reposing on His bosom. She is: "The Queen Consort and ever accessible merciful Mother and Mediatrix,—Trainer and Conduct-Model of the Universe,—Who is ever united to and is one with God, as the light is ever united to and is one with the sun, as expressed by our Lord Himself in Râmâyaṇa [vi-121-19].

अनन्याहिमयासीता
भास्करेणप्रभायथा ॥

[Note † of 1884 Benedictions of Yogi Pârthasârathi to Lord Ripon]. [1]

1. For parallel ideas, read Cardinal Newman's Meditations and Devotions on the Holy Virgin Mary.

2. Cp: (*a*) Vish: Pur: i-4-27.

ततस्समुत्क्षिप्यधरांस्वदंष्ट्रया
महावराहस्स्फुटपद्मलोचनः ।
रसातलादुत्पलपत्रसन्निभ
स्समुत्थितोनीलइवाचलोमहान् ॥

Also read Harivamṣa, 1st Division Chapter 4 ff.

Like unto sapphire mount with moons in twain
Rising and shading blue the sea,
Which for the Devas' sake didst Thou not churn ?
How then, once joining Thee, can I Thee part ?

[T. V. M. Kôla-Malar-p-Pâvai" x-10-7].

[The meaning is:—"I have taken refuge with my Mother: for one of my Mothers,—the Earth [3] Thou didst undertake a mighty exploit; for obtaining my other Mother, Lakshmi [2] the very ocean Thou didst churn. If They are dear to Thee, and I am dear to Them, how canst Thou not but be dear to me ? Hence my salvation by mediation is secure againt every thing that might conspire against such an end. Once bound to Thee thus, I am so secure that neither Thou canst shake me off, nor I can shake Thee off."]

[Bhag: Vish: Bk: x: "Kôla-malarp-Pâvai. x-10-7]

TOPIC 183.

Conclusion. Praise of the Universal Mother.

We close this Treatise with what we, by virtue of an extraordinary operation of Divine Grace, have just come by, namely,—"Our Standard Sam-skṛit-Tamiḷ Commentary on Sage Yâmunâchârya's Hymn to the Mother and Goddess of the Universe, in honor of whom the annual Dasara Festival, the Weekly Friday Festival, &c., &c., are celebrated throughout India. Of the text of this Hymn, the initial verse is as follows:—

(*a*) कान्तस्तेपुरुषोत्तमः
(*b*) फणिपतिश्शय्यासनं
(*c*) वाहनंवेदात्माविहगेश्वरो
(*d*) यवनिकामायजगन्मोहिनी